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October 25, 2004 No. 2751 $1.60

What the Crusades were really like.... p.16

aching English and more at he roof of the world... p. 14

59th year of publication

Forum on World Evangelisation works out practical applications of holistic mission

Harry der Nederlanden

At the final session of the 2004 Forum for World Evangelisation, the new international director of the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelisation (LCWE) Dr. Ted Yamamori stressed once again the importance of holistic mission that combines words and action. Evangelisation must, for example, also address the AIDS pandemic.

Almost 1600 participants from 130 countries met in Pattaya, Thailand for a full week (Sept. 29 to Oct. 6) to address a host of issues related to taking the good news to every corner of the world. Although meeting in Thailand, the forum is named for Lausanne, Switzerland, where the global co-operation among evangelical churches under the leadership of Billy Graham was launched 30 years ago. The document that forms the "constitution" for this cooperative venture is the Lausanne Covenant, drawn up in 1974, which bound together evangelism and social action in a common biblical framework.

Lausanne conference opening ceremony

The meeting was opened with a taste of Thai culture, Thai cuisine, music from the Thai Classical Orchestra, Thai dancing and choirs from Christian schools in Thailand. Dr. Paul Cedar, LCWE Executive Chair, told the gathering that "we have come together from the North, South, East and West" to participate in the Forum "under the leadership and lordship of Jesus Christ." Dr. Cedar emphasized that the Forum is not just a Lausanne conference but one in which every international network of Christian leaders was invited to participate.

Keynote speaker for the opening, Dr. Roger Parrott, 2004 Fo-

Continued on page 3....

Iraq and the roots of terrorism

Harry der Nederlanden

"Are the Americans and British facing a humiliating retreat from Iraq?" asks one of a growing number of articles that seriously entertain the idea that conditions are becoming so intolerable in Iraq that staying is counter-productive. Even some conservatives are calling for the US to cut its losses and pull out, because, as they see it, nothing the coalition can do is going to make the situation any better. The harder the coalition strikes back at the insurgents and jihadists, the more violence it is forced to do and the more Iraqis turn against the "occupiers," seeing them as the problem instead of the solution.

The weekend before I sat down to write this saw two car bombings in Baghdad that resulted in over 20 deaths. It was reported like a normal weekend in Baghdad. Since the bombings began, there have been some 125 suicide attacks along with other bombings, assassinations and attacks. The unrelenting violence is bringing Iraqis to the end of their tether; even strong supporters of the American invasion are on the brink of despair. Along with the daily threat of the suicide bombings, there are the daily kidnappings for ransom and the skyrocketing crime rate. "At least under Saddam...," they are beginning to say.

A couple of weeks ago American casualties passed the 1,000 mark. Americans are beginning to ask: How many more young men and women must give their lives to achieve ... what? What is genuinely achievable in Iraq? Even the Bush administration seems to be backing away from its vision of establishing a stable constitutional democracy in Iraq, one that recognizes the rights of minorities, women and all faiths. If it is impossible to establish such a government for any amount of time beyond the US presence, why stay? If the US presence only incites more killing, why not withdraw as soon as possible?

However, in the endless stream of bad news, there are glimmers of hope. At last Muqtada al Sadr, the cleric with his own army, is urging his followers to put aside their weapons and instead become part of the political process. Some of his followers have been turning in their guns. The chief cleric of the Shiites, Ali al Sistani, is urging his people to take part in the upcoming elections.

On the down side, an association of Muslim scholars claiming to represent some 3,000 Sunni mosques is telling its members to boycott elections. Because of the violence that continues to dominate the so-called "Sunni triangle," it is doubtful Sunnis would venture to the polls in great numbers anyway; it is far too risky. Suicide bombers have taken to targeting such line-ups.

The elections in Afghanistan, however, are another sign of hope. Even under threat of attack from the Taliban, Afghanis turned out in huge numbers to vote, refuting the claim put forward by some that Muslims don't want democracy.

Iraqi determination

An e-mail letter from Ryan Stiles, an American who volunteered to serve in Iraq, conveys something of the resiliency and determination of the Iraqi people:

"They are truly remarkable," he writes. "Every Iraqi serving his country faces kidnapping and assassination. And the threats are not limited to themselves: their families are threatened as well.

"I was over at the Police Academy (the one that took the car bomb yesterday). I talked to a tiny (4'11) female Iraqi police officer. She conveyed to me that when she leaves work everyday, she is often followed. She takes elaborate

Continued on page 2...

Iraq...*continued from page 1*

counter-surveillance measures to lose them. Another female police officer who was a friend of hers was killed on the way home the day before. And yet, even today, there are more volunteers to sign up to be members of the Iraqi Police than there are slots to put them in. The Iraqis refuse to give in to the terrorists, and daily risk their lives, and their families' lives, to make Iraq work. They have shown me the true meaning of 'service'."

The letter also reveals something of the desperate conditions under which Iraqis have been forced to live. Most are not motivated by the ideal of service, but join the police or the national guard because it's the only work they can find. They risk assassination daily in order to feed their families. The risk extends even to translators, several of whom have been murdered, and without them nothing can be done, for very few British or Americans speak Arabic.

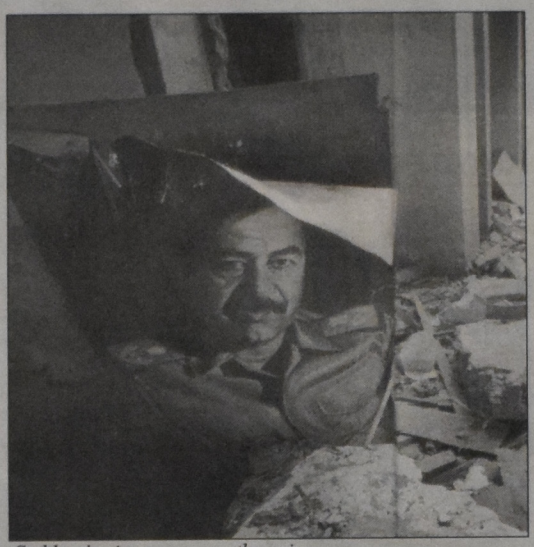
Life is dangerous for coalition troops, but it is doubly so for any Iraqis – and others – who try to help in the reconstruction of the country. It is not just American incompetence that has slowed down everything from turning on the power to training policemen. The insurgency and terrorism have scared off workers and rendered rebuilding in some areas almost impossible.

Indeed, as the Americans are forced to resort to heavy weaponry to dislodge insurgents, more damage is being done. Fallujah has been one of the main hotspots. The locals are getting so sick of it that they are turning on the foreign jihadists, according to interviews with locals published in the *Washington Post*. Recently fighting was reported between the two groups. One local leader called Zarqawi, the al-Qaeda leader, "deranged."

Reporting Iraq

It has been difficult to judge the progress, or absence of it, in the reconstruction of Iraq because the reporting has become so politicized. But the tendency of journalism to focus on the sensational also means that while all the bombings and assassinations are covered, the mundane work of restoring Iraq's infrastructure does not get covered. Those who believe the intervention in Iraq was a mistake in the first place and that the administration practiced deception to draw Saddam into the War on Terror keep reporting on Iraq from that perspective.

Over the last year, reporting about Iraq told us less about Iraq than about the inner workings of the American government, not only of the present administration but of the Clinton administration as well. The report of the 9/11 commission laid out the inner workings of the various agencies in the US involved in intelligence and how the various little kingdoms interact with the White House, diverting attention to debates about reforming the CIA. Richard Clarke's



Saddam's picture among the ruins

book on his struggles to make terrorism a priority in the White House, diverted "blame" away from the actual terrorists to laxity on the part of the Bush administration. The Abu Ghraib prison scandal once again provided fodder for those eager to paint the Americans as the real terrorists. And in between there were all sorts of lesser scandals being unearthed concerning distortions of information about Weapons of Mass Destruction, links between al Qaeda and Iraq, Saddam's nuclear weapons program, the inadequate size of the army, the lack of pre-invasion planning for post-war security and reconstruction, and so on. It's a wonder that the US administration was able to focus on the work of putting Iraq back on its feet. And it's an even bigger wonder that so many Americans have continued to back Bush's resolve to see the Iraq reconstruction through to the end.

It seems impossible to put the wisdom or folly of the initial decision out of the picture, to put it in the past as water over the dam and to focus instead on Iraq and the needs of the people there. Part of the reason is, I believe, because judgments about the beginning of the war and judgments about what needs to be done now in Iraq flow out of diverging views of history.

The Duelfer Report

Charges about the presence or absence of weapons of mass destruction and ties to Islamic terrorism were shrugged off by the Bush administration, which pointed instead to the evils of Saddam's regime and his ambitions in the region. Although the recent Duelfer Report was covered by the media as confirming once again that there were no WMDs (something that hardly needed confirming), the thrust of the report was very different. It supplied evidence that sanctions were not working, that they were being undermined by UN corruption, and that Saddam was already making preparations for their complete collapse. Although he didn't have the hardware, he was spending billions derived from the oil-for-food program to get his weapons program out of mothballs and to revive his megalomaniacal dream of uniting the Arab world under his rule. The report suggests that had Bush and Blair not tackled Saddam when they did, we would almost certainly be facing an even more dangerous foe in the near future.

But in history such projections are extremely iffy.

Addressing the roots

Another reason the Bush administration treated al-Qaeda connections lightly involves its broader view of the politics of terrorism. Many charge that US policy does not address the roots of terrorism, but its aim was precisely to do that. The root of terrorism, in its view, is the lack of freedom and opportunity open to the young people in Muslim dominated lands, and this is causing some forms of Islam to morph into a fundamentalism that breeds hatred and violence. The more such fundamentalist ideas spread, the more the Arab world shuts itself off from the very ideas, institutions and structures that will bring employment and freedom. Democratic freedom, in this view, is essential to enable the Arab world to break out of its downward spiral.

By removing the most vicious, most hated tyrant from the heart of the Middle East and turning that nation into a showcase for democracy, a living proof that Islam and democracy can flourish together, Bush was addressing – in a typically American way – the roots of terrorism.

Bush and his advisors, I believe, are right in seeing that they must address something much wider than cells of al-Qaeda terrorists. Whether that can be done by "nation building," that is, by giving the Iraqi people democratic institutions, remains to be seen. From the beginning, it was a huge act of faith. It assumes that human nature is more important than history and tradition, that in the heart of every people there is a natural yearning for liberty and democracy, and that this can overcome the lack of any long period of gestation.

Usually, when critics talk about addressing the roots of terrorism, of course, they have something very different in mind. They speak about the injustice of the huge gap in wealth between Muslim countries and the West. The assumption is that terrorism arises from resentment by the poor of the privilege, wealth and position of the powerful: the desire of the servant is to be like the master.

No doubt, there is a measure of truth to this, but not for al Qaeda and for Wahhabi Islamists in general. Osama himself comes from a wealthy family, and many of the suicide bombers, too, come from relatively prosperous homes. They reject the materialism and decadence of the West in no uncertain terms. But some of their strongest condemnations and threats are saved for their co-religionists, the Shiites, calling them heretics, "the most evil creatures under heaven."

Both visions of how to address the problem of terrorism are deeply rooted in Western views of history – one right wing and the other left. Ironically, here it is the conservatives who have embraced an optimistic view of human nature. The left wing is more pessimistic about the ability to export democracy, largely because it is more relativist and multicultural. It no longer believes that there are norms and institutions that are good for everyone and necessary for human flourishing and happiness. Or at least that's what the left often says. The assumption that resentment and violence decreases when there is greater economic equality suggests otherwise. At heart, we are all more or less married to liberal ideals.

I don't have a supra-Western perspective to offer on Iraq. I do think it high time to stop going over the war rationale and charging Bush and Blair with deception and dark motives. They are both ironically two of the most devout Christian leaders we have seen in quite some time. That does not warranty the wisdom of their decisions, of course. The Americans have been guilty of all sorts of failures, stupidities and even wickedness, and, as Niall Ferguson puts it, what is needed is "double helpings of humble pie all around."

Another thing that is needed is to stop indulging our perverse need to blame America for the violence. The mass killings, which are taking more Iraqi lives than American, are not the acts of freedom fighters or resistance heroes. If the "insurgents" desisted and allowed the process of normalization and rebuilding to happen, the Americans would withdraw in a few months. Iraqis would assume policing duties and Iraqi leaders could hash out the future of their country on their own.

But the al-Qaeda mindset thrives on anarchy and violence. It stains the world with the blood of innocents wherever it goes: Israel, Egypt, Pakistan, Indonesia, India, France, Nigeria, Spain, the US. It is the perpetrators who are guilty; not those who oppose them.

It is high time we stop espousing this victim theology that lays the blame for all poverty, oppression and powerlessness on the past or on those more fortunate. It harms those who accept the role of victim more than the rich. And it does little to inspire the latter to enter into the right kind of partnership.

News

Forum on World Evangelisation

...continued from page 1

rum Chair, urged participants to catch hold of the fresh wind of God, drawing on sailing metaphors. He said that it takes certain skills "to sail where God leads us."

Our willingness to sail with God's wind, said Parrott, is expressed by six benchmarks: unwavering trust; outward vision; constant preparation; gentle patience; navigational sensitivity; and complete effort. Much like the global weather patterns, he said, this wind is interconnected around the world in ways that we don't understand or often see, starting with a slight breeze that becomes so strong it topples everything in its path.

Parrott reminded participants that this same wind of the Spirit blew at Pentecost, blew again at Lausanne 1974 and can once again blow across the 2004 Forum. He concluded by saying that the wind will blow in Thailand if partici-pant's sole desire is to live, work and relate to each other in a way that catches the wind of God.

The committee does not have a central headquarters, but the leaders and deputy directors throughout the developing and developed countries maintain contact and network through electronic communication and meetings. Periodically position papers are published to stimulate discussion and action among evangelical churches.

This is the fourth such global meeting organized by the Lausanne committee, this time for the purpose of developing specific action plans on a number of different fronts. In subsequent years, there will be regional meetings to further flesh out and implement the basic directions worked out in Thailand.

The Lausanne mission statement "The whole *church* taking the whole *gospel* to the whole *world*" was taken as the organizing framework, but was further broken down into sub-themes. World, church, gospel was broken down into 31 issues, with each group led by participants selected prior to the forum from lists supplied by international church leaders.

A full year of preparation preceded the meeting, as participants absorbed research and dialogue submitted to the Forum from some 4,000 Christian leaders and thinkers from all around the world. The many diverse Issue Groups like those on globalization, the persecuted church, holistic mission, AIDS, future leadership and so on have, thus, been functioning long before the actual meeting.

Fifty-one percent of participants were from Asia, Africa, Eastern Europe and Latin America while 49 percent were from Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United States and Western Europe. The Forum attracted many youn-ger leaders, with 70 percent of the participants under the age of 50 and 30 percent over age 50. Twenty-three percent were female and 77 percent male.

The new internation director of LCWE, Dr. Ted Yamamori expressed the hope that the Forum "will catalyze a fresh movement in Lausanne, equipping participants with the knowledge of, and strategies for, the issues facing the church in the 21 st century." Yamamori said the appointment of new Regional Deputy Directors allows Lausanne to be a decentralized and deinstitutionalized group. Yama-mori was born and raised in a Buddhist family in Nagoya, Japan. After his conversion, he began preparing his life for the ministry with a passion to be utilized by God in the cause of world evangelization. He was first introduced to Lausanne by his mentor Dr. Donald A. McGavran, pioneer in modern church growth thinking.

Dr. Paul Cedar emphasized that the focus on grassroots solutions to the 31 issues impacting global evangelization is especially important because ultimately the work is up to the local churches. The goal, he said, is that "Issue Groups provide not merely theoretical or hypothetical insights but very practical proposals and suggested strategies that will be implemented under the guidance of the Holy Spirit in regions, nations, cities and local churches around the world – for the glory of God and the advancement of his Kingdom."

Each Issue Group was told to think in terms of ABC: Action steps useful to the churches; Books and publications to provide further help; and Continuing activity for regional consultations in the years ahead.

Here's an example of what two groups were doing:

Issue Group #3: The Persecuted Church

Why is it important? The interdependence of the worldwide Church calls for our deepest empathy toward those who are currently in situations of persecution. "If one member suffers, all suffer together with him." I Cor. 12:25

Action Plan

Pray for interceders for the persecuted church, accepting our interdependence in sharing the gospel in our time!

Listen to and learn from Christians in situations of suffering and persecution. We are incomplete without them.

Make the Word of God freely accessible to those under persecution.

Resource them in practical ways and sensitively hold up the universal declaration for their Human Rights.

Issue Group #17: Redeeming the Arts

Why is it important? God, the original artist, revealed himself creatively. His Word is 75% story, 15% poetry and 10% Greek linear thinking. Despite the universal use of story, and the increased visual orientation of our world, the Church has reversed this divine pattern. Today, 90% of communication by the Church is instructive in nature — only 10% contains a narrative or creative approach.

Action Plan

Secular artists are discipling the Nations! The Church must pass on its transforming story through artistic expressions that move the whole person and capture the imagination.

Ideas have consequences. What we believe determines what we do. The Church must abandon its suspicion of the arts in order for it to recover a biblically-based understanding of the role of the imagination to express "True Truth." The attitude of the Church is that if it moves and has color – it can't be Christian.

The Church must become a community that celebrates creativity and the arts – a community where the artist is supported, discipled and spiritually accountable.

[Pictured are speakers Dr. Tetsunao Yamamori (top) and Dr. Roger Parrott (bottom), conference building and some of the participants.]

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Guest Editorial

From old boxes to new triangles

Dr. Rem Kooistra

History means change

My long-time friend Lloyd Burghart wrote an interesting article entitled: "Church geometry: from boxes to triangles." I thought it might be beneficial to reflect a bit more on this article.

Burghart begins with the well-known observation that we live in a changing world. Any historian will agree that history shows us a picture of constant change. The only thing that does not change is change itself. Today I am different from what I was yesterday.

We use boxes

Burghart rightly says that we like to put things in boxes. We do this so we know what we are talking about.

Boxes have three dimensions, but for our purposes it might have been better had we chosen an object with only two dimensions. In our experience we often notice that there are almost always two parties, two sides to the problem. We divide almost automatically in pro and contra, for or against.

This seems to be characteristic for our human society. It seems that we are born for a two-party system. If we are not progressive, we are conservative; if not republican, we are democrats.

Such divisions have always dominated our discussions and our history. In the Netherlands there were the "preciessen"(rigid) and the "rekkelijken"(flexible), later also the "heavy-weighters" and the "light-weighters." It became also the struggle between the "right wing" and the "left wing." It is a division which is global, universal. Even within the left wing of any party there is a right and left section.

Early church history.

In the history of the early Christian church we see Augustine on the right and Pelagius on the left. Augustine believed that we were completely corrupted by sin. He put it this way: now we are in the situation that we cannot not sin, which means a loss of the situation in Paradise when we also could have chosen not to sin. At the end of time the situation will be that we cannot sin any more.

Agustine confessed that without Christ we would never be able to reach that state. But Pelagius believed that we could also do much to save ourselves. Augustine believed that our will was dead, but Pelagius was more optimistic, teaching that our good will was sick, but not dead.

The Reformation.

After the Reformation the battle flared up again in the controversy between Gomarus and Arminius. The followers of Gomarus saw themselves as the "true" Calvinists, but the followers of Arminius were less orthodox and later became known as the Evangelicals. They believed we had lost much by sin, but that God had left us with a free will. Billy Graham put it this way: "God wants to give you salvation, but he cannot do so unless you ask for it."

The twentieth century.

When I came to Canada after the Second World War, a similar division existed within the Christian Reformed Church. There were supporters of the *Torch and Trumpet* (T&T) and of the *Reformed Journal* (RJ). The T&T people often felt that they were better (more orthodox) than those from the RJ, but the RJ people often felt culturally superior to their T&T brothers and sisters.

[Those raised in The Netherlands will think in this connection of the different emphases of *De Bazuin* and *De Heraut*, or of *Het Gereformeerde Weekblad* and *Centraal Weekblad.*

Similarly, there were the differences between the Secession (Afscheiding, 1834) and the Doleantie (1886) and later between the Theologische School of the Reformed (Gereformeerde) Churches in The Netherlands and the Free University in Amsterdam.]

A new situation

Burghart offers us a new perspective. He wants to replace the old boxes and their two directions with a new triangle which of course has three sides. He calls the three sides of the triangle: the confessional, the evangelical and the transformational. Burghart observed: "These three emphases are always in a dynamic tension."

I will follow Burghart's example. Under the confessional Burkhart understands: "holding to the historic reformed creeds developed in the 1500's (Heidelberg Catechism, Belgic Confession, and Canons of Dort or the Westminster standards), The evangelical emphasis "stresses a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and the need for an individual conversion experience." And, finally, the transformational emphasis relates Christ to culture and sees the church as being a change agent in providing a biblical social justice model in society."

It would not be too difficult to find examples of all three emphases in every historical period. During the Age of the Reformation there were groups which stressed the need for personal faith, and in some evangelical churches today we observe a movement towards the transformational agenda.

It is also important to notice that we find these three emphases reflected in all churches and in all major religions. There were periods in the history of the Christian Reformed Church that the main emphasis was on the confessional side of the triangle. I think here of the long controversy about "women in office." Lately, it seems, many feel that something is missing in the evangelical message. I think here of what is happening in South America and also in Southern Africa, especially the work of Nelson Mandela. Even in Islam we find these three emphases reflected in some way and with different applications, depending on cultural developments.

Burghart about Burghart.

It is also worth noticing what Burghart tells us about his own development. He writes: "In my 68 years, I can look back and see what emphases were dominant at different stages in my life." Burghart confesses: "I grew up in a fundamentalist Baptist background where the dominant emphasis was evangelical." But during his university years and the early years of his marriage, he was introduced to Reformed teaching which persuaded him to become a Presbyterian. This changed the form of his triangle. The confessional line became longer and thicker you might say. But after he moved to Canada and worked in Christian schools for 21 years, for 7 years in port ministry and now for the last 3 1/2 years as a pastor, he finds that the transformational emphasis is now the strongest.

It might be interesting if we all tried to draw the triangle of our lives and of the changes that occurred with it or within it during our life time.

Where are we now?

The interesting question for each of us is where am I at present? Am I climbing or slipping? As I wrote in the beginning: life is a history of change. We don't stand still. Burghart feels his "direction has been generally upward."

What about mine and yours? What about the church as a whole? I asked a good friend about this and he hesitated. Finally he said: "Church-going has diminished considerably in these last years." But it was not with full conviction. My friend felt also that there are other factors to be considered. In his article Burghart asks: "Where will we be in 2040? What will my triangle look like?" His article ends with some uncertainty in these words: "Maybe, just maybe, it will truly become equilateral. Wouldn't that be something?"

Now we Christians have always been pretty good navel-gazers. I am sure that some readers only see the downward trend. Our Lord himself asked, "Will the Son of Man find faith on earth when he returns?"

We may not be too pessimistic about the future. And we don't know when Christ will be with us again. There might still be a time of progress or of return.

Conclusion.

We always must keep in mind that the Lord builds his kingdom. He has promised us not only more indifference and backsliding, but also that the gates of hell will not prevail. God knows his people and nobody will be able to pull them out of his hands.

This is also the secret of God's kingdom: there might be more children of God than you expect. One Salvation Army officer said it this way: When Christ returns you will be amazed, for there will be many you did not expect. And many you did expect to enter the Kingdom of God will not be there. And you will be amazed that you are there as well. Amazing grace!

Do not identify yourself with God's kingdom. God's kingdom does not depend on you or your faithfulness. Some people always think that God cannot succeed without our help They ask who will defend the gates of Zion when I am not there?

Try to live the Christian life in all sincerity and simplicity. Concentrate on the fruits of the Spirit as described in Galations 5.

Be steadfast in your faith and confession,

Live close to God, enjoy his presence in your life and work every day.

Be always eager to help in transforming the values of our present generation. May the three sides of the triangle be under construction as long as you are here.

Dr. Remkes Kooistra has been writing for this paper almost from its beginning. He is now living in Holland Christian Homes and served as a Reformed pastor for 60 years. I had to cut about 500 words from his reflective piece to make it fit here.

Christian Courier

Founded in 1945

An independent biweekly that seeks to:
report on significant events in the Christian community and the world; express opinions infused by Scripture and rooted in a Reformed perspective;
provide contact for the Christian community.

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Christian Courier
1 Hiscott St, St. Catharines ON L2R 1C7
Tel: (905) 682-8311; 1-800-969-4838
Fax: (905) 682-8313; Web site: www.christiancourier.ca
Publications Mail Registration No. 09375
We acknowledge the financial assistance of the Government of Canada, through the Publications Assistance Program (PAP), toward our mailing costs.

Letters

Response to Mr. James Joosse

Mr. James Joosse is scathing in his criticism of the Podhoretz essay (*CC*, October 11), which I reviewed favorably in the September 13 issue of this paper. I want to respond briefly to the main points of his critique.

He condemns President Bush for singling out the Axis of Evil as demonizing the "other". Since when is it wrong to call regimes that reduce whole nations to prison camps, treat people as expendable vermin, rule by terror, imprisonment, large-scale murder, invade a neighboring country, and threaten to unleash a nuclear holocaust on the world, as evil?

I am at a loss how to apply to such regimes what Mr. Joosse calls the "imperative to embrace the enemy in love…" Does the love command not call for helping to free the oppressed and to call evil evil? That's why I look on the liberation of Afghanistan and Iraq as a good deed. Just ask the courageous leaders of these nations.

Mr. Joosse acknowledges that evil is real, but that "no one has a monopoly on good or evil?" True, we are all sinners in need of grace. But I reject what many now regard as the moral equivalence between the democratic West and the wretched tyrannies that have declared war on us. (In fact, it's worse when America is called the greater threat to peace.)

Instead of calling such tyrannies by their right name, Mr. Joosse refers to the current U.S. military effort in Iraq at the very least as a form of "criminal negligence and at worst, crimes against humanity." Who is doing the demonizing now?

What is an especially perverse effect of "demonizing" the U.S. is that it plays right into the hands of the terrorists who are now doing everything possible to obstruct the re-building of Iraq and to demoralize the American people.

Can anyone ever forget the obscene spectacle of the delirious crowds all over the Arab world who praised Allah at the news of the horrific crime on September 11, 2001?

Or the pictures of mutilated bodies of four men hanging from a bridge in Fallujah surrounded by cheering crowds? These Americans were murdered because they had come to help re-build Iraq's badly damaged infrastructure.

As I write this the grotesque pictures of Mr.Kenneth Bigley's beheading are televised all over the Arab world. The "crime" of this British engineer was that he too had come to assist in the reconstruction of Iraq.

May we not say that such deeds bespeak a mindset that the Bible calls satanic?

Mr. Joosse is entirely silent about the hatred instilled in the followers of Osama bin Laden and similar religious fanatics, who kill indiscriminately, even little children. How should we respond to that kind of perversion of religion?

This is the question that lies at the heart of this controversy, and Mr. Joosse's complete silence on that score is, to put it mildly, a serious omission.

Harry Antonides

Christian Courier thankful for faithful readers

Here with my cheque for another year. This is the 50th year I am reading your paper, enjoying every issue. I am close to blind and read it with a viewer.

I wish you God's blessings now and in the future. I am 96 years old.

With friendly greetings,

Wilhelmina Gent
Willowdale CRC

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• 90 ATTACKS PER DAY ON U.S. TROOPS
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Mike Keefe THE DENVER POST 2004

We must hear the call to repentance

Thank you for your thorough and insightful analysis of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches' document entitled "Covenanting for Justice in the Economy of the Earth." Most of the points you have raised and the arguments you articulated were presented by me and other delegates to the 24th General Council meeting of WARC in Ghana.

The several days of discussion about the document at the General Council meeting resulted in a more nuanced and better-articulated statement than that with which the discussion began. Unfortunately, the statement had not been written in advance of the meeting and therefore the Reformed churches from around the world did not have an opportunity to discuss it prior to the meeting. No particular delegate to the meeting commits his or her denomination to the document. This document will gain credence and acceptance only insofar as it is received by the assemblies of the more than 240 Reformed churches represented at the meeting. In fact, the CRC Church Order Article 50-c specifies that "decisions of Reformed ecumenical synods [councils] shall be binding upon the Christian Reformed Church only when they have been ratified by its synod."

Even though the document was penned at the meeting, there had been seven years of intellectual preparation for it. The preparation followed from decisions made by WARC in Debrecen in 1997. In several regions of the world, Reformed churches came together to study and reflect upon Scripture and the world situation (economically, environmentally, racially, religiously, etc). Out of these regional meetings a general consensus began to form about the shape and content of a prophetic statement regarding justice in the economy and the environment. Since the CRC has just recently joined WARC (late 2002), we did not participate in regional gatherings and as it turned out the North American churches in WARC had done very little advance preparation on these issues. Most of us were caught by surprise, and that is a bad way to enter a discussion of this importance.

Having said all that, I think that many CRC members will resonate with many of the emphases found in WARC's statement. The gospel message condemning mammon and materialism have rung from our pulpits for six generations. The idolatrous lure of nationalism and statism has been warned against too. Stewardship of the earth and care for the creation are themes in our preaching and our contemporary testimony. The unsettling factor for many of us in the WARC document is that we in the North are the focus of its judgment. The world Reformed church is placing our culture under the searchlight of the gospel and finding it wanting. That is uncomfortable and should lead us to reflect and repent for that which we have done amiss. Many of us, however, are more likely to respond and react rather than reflect and repent. Although the CRC is not now and may never be officially committed to the "Covenanting for Justice in the Economy and the Earth" document, I hope we are humble enough to be willing to learn from it and to hear in it the church's proclamation of God's Word to the world and to itself. As with all proclamations, let us seek God's Spirit to help us discern and appropriate the truth in this one.

Thank you again for this opportunity to clarify the process and the CRC's involvement in it.

Yours in Christ's Service,
David H. Engelhard
General Secretary

Christian Courier

Member of Canadian Church Press and Evangelical Press Association

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one yr. (25 issues)	$40.00	$32.00 (US)	one year - $85.00
two yrs. (50 issues)	$75.00	$60.00 (US)	

Advertising deadlines: display advertising: Tuesday, 9 a.m. (13 days before publication date); classified advertising: Tuesday, 9 a.m. (13 days before publication date).
See classified pages or web site **www.christiancourier** for more details.
(ISSN 1192-3415) Published biweekly on Mondays.
Address all correspondence to: 1 Hiscott St, St. Catharines ON L2R 1C7
Tel: 905-682-8311 or 1-800-969-4838, or fax: 905-682-8313
e-mail: Advertising: ads@christiancourier.ca
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Meditation

Death of a mockingbird

Larry Forcey

Atticus Finch sat at Jem's bedside. A piano's soft melody emerged as Boo Radley emerged from behind the bedroom door and held Scout's hand. Across from me, I heard tears.

My sister was weeping. I glanced at her, startled that she shared my sentiments of the moment – I hadn't known her to like movies such as this. But soon I realized the steady flow of tears were too great for the movie to warrant such reactions. I studied her closer, her thick-rimmed glasses and disheveled hair, hid her beauty. The nightgown she wore had not been changed for several days, and the darkening yellow tint of her skin told us that something was wrong.

She had dammed the past two months in her soul and the walls could no longer hold the waters. The tender scene from *To Kill a Mockingbird* catalysed the turmoil within her. She was beginning to accept the reality, the inevitability of her pending end. Cancer was winning.

I turned the channel.

Before any of us knew the seriousness of my sister's illness, several weeks prior to the doctor's informing us of the advanced stage of liver cancer, I had counseled a group of high schoolers from our church at a camp in Northern California. After a visit to Yosemite, while we loaded back onto our buses, I overheard some of the students discussing suffering with the guest speaker at the camp, specifically, why God allows bad things to happen. The answers coming from those seated near me were familiar: pain and suffering is a result of sin; God allows us to suffer so that our faith will grow.

I listened, but like Job's friends was anxiously seeking an opportunity to share an insight I had recently heard from a pastor, preaching from Luke 13: "There were present at that season some who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answered and said to them, "Do you suppose that these Galileans were worse sinners than all other Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish. Or those eighteen, on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, do you think that they were worse sinners than all other men who dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish."

> She was a manifestation of the mockingbird that Atticus taught his children to never hurt.

Suffering is a given, I explained to those on the bus, all of us will suffer, all of us will die, maybe not in a tragedy similar to this passage, but all meet the same fate, just like the Galileans, just like the victims at Siloam.

Jesus redirects the crowd's attention from wondering why God allows these tragedies, to considering the reality of eternity. The assumption of the crowd was that the Galileans' deaths were the end, there was nothing afterward. When Jesus says, "Unless you repent you will all likewise perish," he is prodding the crowd to reconsider this assumption – that is, if they repent, the Galileans' death, albeit tragic, is not the final chapter, not if they had repented before the tragedy.

Our concern ought not to be why God allows suffering, but to turn from our sins and seek God.

It was a cold answer and I knew it would not be welcomed; even the camp's speaker seemed surprised at my solemnity. But he agreed, albeit with a crooked grin that I interpreted as him saying, "Will you feel the same when something terrible hits you?"

It was less than one month later that the doctors told us my sister had only several months to live. The chemotherapy and radiation accomplished nothing, making her last three months even darker. The doctors were correct.

So was the camp speaker.

For twelve years I have been searching for an answer, some meaning, some explanation for those last five months of my sister's life. I am back on that bus, searching for that answer the high school students were seeking.

My answer to them no longer seems adequate. Though I believe it in my head, my heart and my faith want something more.

My parents asked me to offer the eulogy at the memorial service and the one image that sticks in my memory of that day is that the pews were full. This was a testament to the passage I had chosen to read: "...the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." No, but rather, those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary. And those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor..." (I Corinthians 12: 21-23).

My sister was a perfect example of this passage: she was a faithful follower of Jesus. She loved him, she sought him. She did not like the spotlight, she preferred to work, to serve, to do what needed to be done, recognition was not necessary.

I saw this my whole life. Six years my senior, she attended my little league games; when I started running, she'd go to the races with me; even in our black-and-white family photos, I can see the love she had for her two younger brothers. Outside our family, it was no different. People she had gone to school with, coworkers, people in her dance class. These were the faces in the pews.

I did not realize the testimony she lived. Her light and love were what Jesus wants in his disciples so "that the love with which you loved me may be in them, and I in them." (John 17:26)

She was a manifestation of the mockingbird that Atticus taught his children to never hurt: "...I reckon because mockingbirds don't do anything but make music for us to enjoy. They don't eat people's gardens, don't nest in the corncribs, they don't do one thing but just sing their hearts out for us..."

My sister enjoyed life, and she helped others enjoy it as well. She sought God and the attendance at her memorial was testament that she helped others seek him. "Why then," I ask God, "did you take her at only 32? She was faithful. Could she not have done even more?"

Though I believe good may have come to other's lives as a result of my sister's testimony being brought into the spotlight; and though it has strengthened my faith, I still wonder about those four months she suffered and what her life might have been had she lived longer. Jesus' answer has not changed. "Unless you repent, you will likewise perish."

Could it be that eternity apart from God is so unimaginably bleak and hopeless, that Jesus would show no compassion in his answer, only warn us of eternal damnation? Could it be that he would answer our questions today the same as he answered those of the crowds in the Luke passage? "Unless we repent, we will likewise perish."

Maybe, suffering and death are not the worst things that can happen to us.

Larry Forcey is a freelance writer.

Politics

Time to help shape a national child care strategy?

Greg deGroot-Maggetti

Child care is atop the national policy agenda in a way it has not been for more than a decade. The Paul Martin government lists creating a national child care program among its three main priorities – alongside health care and a cities agenda. Now is an excellent time to engage the many questions that cluster around arrangements for the nurturing of Canada's children.

Child care is connected to just about everything that matters. First of all, of course, it's about children and how they might thrive. It is also an anti-poverty strategy – and a women's issue, a family policy issue, an employment issue, a religious issue and an economic requirement. Public policy questions angle in from many directions. For example:

Would not a national child care program discriminate against families with a stay-at-home parent?

Why not just subsidize child care for poor, single parent families?

Why not just cut taxes and let parents buy the child care they want?

These and other questions are at the nerve centre of a long-standing national debate. Some areas of agreement seem to be emerging in the light of recent experience; other issues remain divisive, uncertain or just plain difficult.

First Principles

In its submission to the 1994 Social Security Review, CPJ wrote:

In order for parents to have access to paid employment, they require child care that is adequate, affordable and available in their community. Nevertheless, child care should be seen primarily as a developmental service for children, and not simply as place to put children while their parents are working. (CPJ 1994, Building a National Community.)

CPJ also advocated the principle of parental choice and community involvement in identifying the needs of children and families and in establishing programs to meet them in their communities.

While the debate around child care in Canada has often been framed as an opposition between those who champion full-time, home-based parenting and those who accept that both parents will have careers in the work force, there seems to be a convergence today in the proposals coming from both ends of that spectrum. For example, REAL Women and the Childcare Research and Resource Unit at the University of Toronto have often upheld opposing principles. But the most recent proposals from these two groups overlap at many points.

REAL Women of Canada "recognizes that today...paid child care is often an essential and invaluable service.... Whenever parents require paid child care, (it should) be of the highest possible quality. We believe that it should be the parents' right to choose the kind and location of child care that best accommodates their family value system and the particular needs of their child, whether or not (the care) is government subsidized.... Government funded satellite child care should be made available to provide supervision and learning facilities (toys, equipment, books) to small neighborhood arrangements. Drop-in centres could be available to provide after-school supervision and activities, or to accommodate parents on shift work. They could also serve as resource centres to provide educational and social support for families."

Martha Friendly of CRRU describes a healthy Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) system that is equally flexible. She envisions a coast-to-coast system backed up by family-friendly laws, especially supporting maternity/parental leave. The ECEC system in different provinces would employ different models and options but share common principles and goals, as with Canada's health care system. All families would have access to an ECEC centre in their own community. Staff would be trained, qualified and well paid. Centres would be available, on a non-compulsory basis, full-day or part-time, to assist families with a parent at home as well as families whose parents are in the workforce.

Free market or national system?

Although consensus seems to be growing around some elements of a national early childhood strategy, sharp differences remain over options for how to get there.

Groups like REAL Women and the free market-oriented Fraser Institute recommend giving parents money and letting them shop around for the child care arrangements that suit them. The Fraser Institute, true to form, also suggests that for-profit child care offers the most efficient way to meet demand. Many other groups, including Campaign 2000 (the national network devoted to ending child poverty in Canada), favor institutional funding for early childhood education and care. Moreover, recent federal/provincial initiatives such as the Early Childhood Development Initiative and the Multilateral Agreement on Early Learning and Child Care focus on institutional funding for regulated child care and early childhood development programs.

Public Justice perspective

Where does CPJ come down on the current questions?

CPJ's position rests on where we start, our vision of society. In the public justice perspective, the person is a social being. Community is a constitutive dimension of what it means to be human. We are not merely individuals who make contracts to get needs met. We are born into some communities – for example, our families and countries of origin – and we choose freely to join other communities.

Therefore, the role of government is not just to assure that individuals are free to enter into contracts and relationships of their choosing. Government exists also to help society's varied institutions and communities to maintain the resources they need to fulfill their role in contributing to the common good.

If children and families need access to high quality early childhood education and care, is this best achieved by adopting a market model, or by publicly funding the institutional development of child care and early childhood education?

This question has to do with more than just how much money is needed to subsidize a given number of child care spaces. Quality of care depends, among other things, on the education of child care providers and their level of pay. This requires well-developed programs of education/training, in various settings, for the workers involved. It means increasing the salaries of these workers – whose pitifully low levels of pay are a clear social injustice. And money is needed to build the relevant infrastructure – child care centres, family resource centres, etc. Excess space in schools will be useful, but converting such space costs money.

Quantity and quality – not always twins

A market based approach holds that giving parents the money to shop for child care will, by raising effective demand, lead to the full development of high quality child care. Ontario recently experimented with such an approach. It created the Ontario Child Care Supplement for Working Families. This supplement was given to low and modest income families with children under seven to help cover their child care costs.

Did Ontario's supplement approach lead to the development of new child care supply? The evidence suggests it did not. Indeed, several Ontario municipalities faced the real prospect of cutting child care spaces for lack of funding, prior to the infusion of new public dollars in 2004 through the *Multilateral Framework for Early Learning and Child Care.*

By contrast, Quebec embarked on a publicly funded child care program in 1997. Since then, Quebec accounts for the lion's share of new child care spaces created in all of Canada.

Research shows something of a tension between creating child care spaces at the lowest cost versus creating high quality programs. The Fraser Institute's Peter Shawn Taylor looked at Australia, which has encouraged the for-profit child care industry and has more than met the demand for spaces. He concludes, "If the supply of child care is a problem and government funding a constraint, then the solution lies in encouraging greater private sector participation."

When research compares quality of child care in for-profit vs. non-profit settings, then non-profits score consistently higher. For example, Pierre Lefebvre of the University of Quebec reports that of the centres he studied, only 7% of the for-profits met the standards for a "good quality" rating, while 34% of the non-profit centres met those standards.

This evidence suggests that minimizing cost-per-space is a misleading measure of efficiency. If creating high quality child care is a central goal of a national child care strategy, emphasis should be placed on creating not-for-profit child care.

We will never stop needing devoted, confident and delighting parents, whose love and care for their children builds hope for our future and enlivens our present. We also need public support for the programs and services that help parents in their multiple roles as mothers and fathers, workers, neighbors and citizens. Good quality child care is one of those services.

** Greg deGroot-Maggetti is socio-economic policy analyst with the national faith-based public policy organization Citizens for Public Justice (www.cpj.ca).*

Church

Christians in China appeal labor camp punishment

Xu Mei

NANJING, China (Compass) – The relatives of three Christian men being held in labor camps in mainland China have appealed to local authorities for an explanation of their crimes. A written appeal was also sent to Christians in Hong Kong in May 2004.

The appeal reveals the ignorance of many officials in rural China concerning Christianity. It also demonstrates the injustices suffered by believers in the Peoples Republic of China.

All three men – two with the family name Wu and another with the family name Li – hail from Guangxi in southwestern China. They were sentenced to "re-education through labor" for the crime of belonging to an unregistered church. In the words of local authorities, the men are being punished for "creating an atmosphere of terror and making the people psychologically fearful."

The text of the appeal sent to Hong Kong reads as follows:

"In 1996 a man from Sichuan, with the family name Li, came to our area to preach Jesus. It was all very new, and we listened carefully but he did not baptize anyone.

"In June 1997 the (local) government said our meeting was divisive and 'upset social order.' They sent more than 30 officials to surround us, and in the middle of the night they went into every believer's home and ordered everyone, old and young, male and female, to assemble outside. They drove all our livestock away to the local rural government office and the Christians were taken to the local government detention center.

"The prosecutor told us, 'China has not established Christianity. There is no God. It's just a fairy tale. You must not believe in Christianity propagated from Hong Kong. Hong Kong has a capitalist system. They propagate reactionary theories which disturb social order.'

"Then they used handcuffs and electric stun batons to intimidate the Christians. One person was actually knocked out with one. They also forced the Christians to 'confess.'

"Finally 10 Christians were fined. The officials stole all the livestock and ate it. People were in despair.

"At 3 a.m. one morning in April 2003, more than 40 police surrounded two house-churches [in this area]. They found a Bible in the homes of Wu, Wu and Li. All the adult men and women in their families were driven to the local detention center and kept there for two days. The police arrested Li just in his shorts and handcuffed him. The three men were then taken to the county prison. Then their relatives lost all trace of them.

"Finally in October 2003, a policeman told the families that the three men had already been sentenced to 're-education thru labor.'

"If you have a Bible in your home, does this mean you are bad? It's very strange! When the Christians were all in detention, the officials told them that they could no longer believe in God. 'If we discover you still believe, we will not be polite – we will arrest you as we please and beat you as we please,' the Christians were told. But don't Chinese citizens have freedom of religious belief? How can we be arrested, beaten and even killed for our faith?

"In October 2003 we finally were able to go to the labor camp and see the two Wu's and Mr. Li. Five months had already passed but only then did we discover their 'crime' was 'creating an atmosphere of terror and making the people psychologically fearful.'

"We don't understand! What does this mean?"

Signed: the families of
Mr. Wu, Mr. Wu and Mr. Li.

This appeal shows that the basic attitude of Chinese authorities towards Christianity has not changed despite the government's claims of religious freedom in China. House churches are still being harassed by local authorities and Christians are still being sentenced without trial to "re-education through labor" camps.

The appeal seems doubly ironic in the wake of China's rejection of the annual report issued by the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom. Released on September 15, the report criticized China for continued abuse of religious freedoms.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Kong Quan denied the allegations, and according to the Associated Press, said China firmly opposed "the U.S. practice of interfering in the religious affairs of other countries."

Quan also claimed that "Freedom of religious belief is protected by China's constitution and other laws."

Church schools flourishing in secularized England

Cedric Pulford

London (ENI) – Anglicans in England have opened four more secondary schools for the educational year that started this month. It is another step towards the Church of England's goal of 100 new secondary schools for children aged 11 plus.

Despite the growing secularisation of the country and falling church attendance that affect most mainstream denominations, church authorities are confident of reaching the goal.

"Our schools perform well and give a clear sense of values. There is more adherence to the church [among parents] than is reflected in church-going and overt commitment," said the Church of England's chief education officer, the Rev. John Hall.

The (Anglican) Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church, England's two largest denominations, between them operate about one-third of schools in the public sector. The Church of England has 4493 primary and 197 secondary schools, the Catholic Church 1724 primary and 352 secondary.

Other Christian denominations and faiths also see the attraction of religiously-based schools in the public sector: 104 are run by various Christian groups, including 27 Methodist primary schools; Jewish schools number 28 primary and five secondary; Muslims two primary and two secondary; Sikhs one primary and one secondary.

"Pupils and parents, even non-Christians, respect and appreciate the values our schools represent," said Oona Stannard, director of Catholic Education Services in England and Wales. "They provide an excellent, well rounded education."

The state offers these church schools a package that they find attractive: it pays 90 per cent of capital costs and all current costs. Meanwhile, the school appoints the teachers and most of the governors, and controls admissions.

Anglican and Catholic schools both have substantial enrolments of pupils who do not belong to the respective faiths.

Hall said it was "a nightmare" for head teachers when a school was heavily oversubscribed. To allow at least 15 per cent of places for the community at large might mean turning away practising Anglican families.

Roman Catholic schools in the country are also flourishing, with academic results that in many cases outperform secular schools.

The Catholic Oratory school in London hit the headlines when the British prime minister, Tony Blair, an Anglican, and his wife Cherie, a Catholic, sent their two elder sons there. The couple were criticised for transporting the children across London rather than sending them to a nearby secular school.

State support for faith schools has been disputed in the past but present arrangements – which date from a compromise of 1944 – have caused the controversy largely to disappear. Stannard says "a handful of politicians" remain concerned about the issue.

The Methodist Church intends to increase its involvement with education. Government plans for more specialist schools will create opportunities for ecumenical ventures, said Methodist chief education officer Kathleen Wood. Methodists are working with the Church of England as a potential partner in three schools.

Oona Stannard and John Hall are upbeat about prospects for the future.

"We want to be part of the mainstream but with our own distinctiveness," said Stannard.

Hall said: "Politicians nowadays talk the language of choice. We are part of the diversity culture."

80 evangelical leaders arrested in Iran, then released

Barbara G. Baker

ISTANBUL (Compass) – Iranian police invaded the annual general conference of Iran's Assemblies of God Church Sept. 9, arresting at least 80 church leaders gathered at the church's denominational center in Karaj, 20 miles west of Tehran. Each individual was questioned separately by security officials, who had a specific list of questions.

By evening, the authorities had released all the arrested Christians except for the 10 pastors among them. They were released on Sunday three days later from an unknown detention site "quite late in the night."

After their release, the pastors were allowed to return to Tehran to stay with their families or friends in the capital or nearby Karaj. Those living in other cities were returning home the following day.

The pastors reportedly were not given any specific reason for their arrest, although they were asked "many questions about themselves and each other," one source said.

Due to police surveillance monitoring their movements and telephone conversations, the pastors have not made direct contact with other evangelical believers since their release.

Together with 70 other Assemblies of God Church leaders, the pastors had convened at a church center in Karaj for their annual general conference on September 9 when the arrests occurred. Police officials swarmed onto the property that morning, blindfolding all the men and women present and taking them off to be fingerprinted and interrogated.

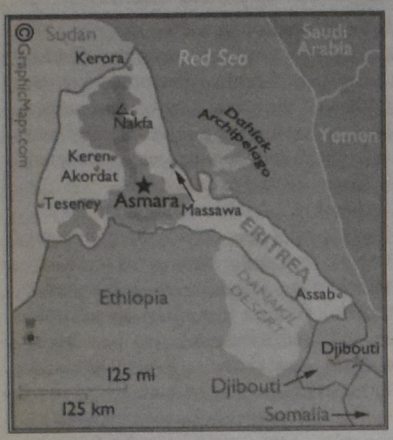
The church leaders had refused to name any one person among them as their top leader, prompting the police to arrest the entire group en masse. The police crackdown was the largest known arrest of Iranian evangelical believers in the past decade.

Since its declaration as an Islamic state in 1979, Iran has clamped down harshly on its Protestant citizens and even closed the Iranian Bible Society. A large number of evangelical churches have been closed for worship, their buildings confiscated and known converts to Christianity put under arrest.

A bulletin said that one of 10 evangelical pastors reported released from detention by police authorities is still being held incommunicado. Assemblies of God Pastor Hamid Pourmand, 47, has not returned to his home and is presumed to remain under police arrest. A former Muslim who converted to Christianity nearly 25 years ago, Pourmand pastors a congregation in southern Iran.

Church

Eritrea arrests five more evangelicals



LOS ANGELES (Compass) — Eritrean security police pounced on five evangelical Christians holding a prayer meeting in their church office in Asmara last week, hauling them off under arrest to a local police station.

Five members of the newly formed New Covenant Church meeting at an office building in the capital were taken into custody about 7:30 in the evening on September 7.

Reportedly six or seven security officials were systematically searching through an entire corridor of offices in the building when they came upon the small group praying together in their office.

After a day's detention at Police Station No. 2, the one woman among them was released, but the four men were transferred to cells at the Adi-Abyto military camp outside Asmara. Among the jailed men was the pastor, identified only by his first name of Yohannes, and his assistant, named David.

Meanwhile, three leading Protestant pastors jailed since late May remain under arrest in a dungeon-like inner prison in Asmara, where many of Eritrea's prominent political dissidents incarcerated over the past three years are believed to be held.

"Short-term imprisonment in this place is something which occurs rarely," a source told Compass. Prison authorities have refused to allow the pastors' families or friends to deliver any food or other provisions to the men since late August, when they were moved to Wongel Mermera from a local police station.

Popular evangelical Christian singer Helen Berhane also remains jailed in strict isolation in a metal container at Mai Serwa, just north of Asmara. Since her arrest four months ago, she has refused to sign a promise to stop participating in evangelical activities and return to the Orthodox church.

Last week, the Eritrean government also expelled the last international journalist based in Asmara, ordering BBC correspondent Jonah Fisher to leave the country within three days. "As a foreigner, I am fortunate," Fisher wrote in a BBC release on September 10. "Had I been Eritrean, I have little doubt that I would now be in detention."

The regime of President Issayas Afewerki banned all of Eritrea's independent Protestant churches in May 2002, ordering their buildings closed and criminalizing any meetings for private worship in members' homes. The 12 outlawed denominations represent congregations totaling at least 20,000 members.

Along with adherents of Islam, who represent nearly half the population, only the Orthodox, Catholic and Lutheran churches are recognized by the Department of Religious Affairs as "official" religions.

Episcopal Church plans to study Israel divestment question

Chris Herlinger

New York, 6 October (ENI) – The US Episcopal Church plans to consider whether the denomination should divest from firms doing business in Israel.

A committee overseeing the US denomination's "socially responsible" investments is recommending that the church spend 12 months studying what actions might be appropriate to protest against Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories.

The focus of the denomination's study, church officials said on October 1, will be on possibly divesting from companies that do business in occupied areas where home demolitions, the building of Israeli settlements and the construction of the controversial separation barrier are occurring.

The Episcopal Church said it would welcome "input" from a variety of sources, including the Jewish community in the United States.

"We value our ongoing relationship with the Jewish community both on interfaith and public policy issues," said Bishop C. Christopher Epting, deputy for the church's Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations division, and Brian Grieves, director of the denomination's Peace And Justice Ministries.

"We continue to believe that it is important to distinguish between what we consider to be legitimate criticism of Israeli governmental policy and action and the impropriety of anti-Jewish prejudice which we deplore," the two church officials stated.

The Episcopal Church's actions follow a move earlier this year by the Presbyterian Church (USA) whose general assembly adopted a resolution calling for a "selective" divestment from companies that do business in Israel, and which has been criticised by US Jewish leaders and members of the US Congress.

The dispute between the Presbyterian church and some members of the Jewish community led to a "summit" between representatives of the two groups on September 28 in New York.

Indonesia closes 12 churches in Bandung

Congregations denied building permits, forbidden to worship in private homes

Samuel Rionaldo

JAKARTA (Compass) – Local authorities recently ordered 12 churches in Bandung, Indonesia, to close their doors. The order came after Muslim clerics protested that the churches were meeting illegally.

The Christians admit they do not have the legal permits required to conduct worship services in private homes. However, these "house church" meetings seemed to be the only option after local authorities refused permission to build proper worship facilities.

Church leaders told Compass that the congregations had applied for permission to build churches as early as March 1993, when the government housing project was established.

However, all applications for church permits were turned down.

"We submitted another application on June 12, 1995, again on January 20, 2000, and on August 27, 2004," explained Rev. Bungaran Silitonga. All four applications were rejected on the grounds that local residents did not want churches in the area.

Also, officials said the land was reserved for housing, not for places of worship.

According to a September 10 report by Komintra news service, flyers were distributed to people living in the housing project in August. Among other things, the flyers warned Muslim residents to stay away from visiting missionaries and Christians.

The same month, the Fellowship of Muslim Scholars and Intellectuals (FSUCM) launched a campaign to close unlicensed churches in the area. The group, led by Koko Komaruddin, sent a letter to the local government objecting to the practice of churches meeting in private homes.

The complaint was based on regulations forbidding the conversion of a private dwelling into a place of worship.

On August 19, 2004, leaders of the twelve disputed churches were invited to a meeting with local government officials. At the meeting, the Christian ministers were asked to sign a document agreeing to stop their worship services. "We refused to sign it," Silitonga said.

A second meeting was held on September 1, during which Komaruddin gave an ultimatum to the churches: they must halt services by September 5 or face the consequences.

The original owner of the land, Mr. Sobari, also addressed the meeting, saying he had sold the land to the government to build houses – not churches.

Two days later, the 12 churches were ordered closed because homes had been converted to places of worship. Rev. John Simon Timorason, head of the West Java Christian Communication Forum, said the move was nothing new. "They tried something similar in 1995," he told Compass, "and again in 2000, when they tried to close the Tabernacle Pentecostal Church.

"There was no problem between churches and local residents. All of this was stirred up by Komaruddin and the FSUCM. He provoked our neighbors to take up this issue against us. Before this we had no real complaints."

The order to stop meeting in their homes left the Christians with a serious dilemma: they had no other place to gather for worship.

Timorason and other church leaders began negotiations with the local government. Finally they were offered the use of an old, vacant warehouse in the middle of a sea of rice paddies. However, as soon as the Christians began cleaning the building, residents of the housing project objected and permission to use the warehouse was withdrawn.

Left without a place of worship, the Christians met again in their former venues on September 12. This move drew criticism from government officials who said the church leaders had broken the law.

The 12 churches represent a growing problem in Indonesia. Muslim groups have forced many other unlicensed churches in West Java to close. The problem stems from the fact that local officials rarely grant permission for a church building to be erected and they don't allow congregations to meet in private venues. Many Christians feel they have no option but to meet illegally.

They say this is an abuse of their basic right to religious freedom.

Church closures have occurred in several districts in West Java in recent weeks.

On August 23, another mob forced the closure of three churches – Caro Batak Church, the Indonesian Protestant Church and Bethel Church – in West Java.

Rev. Karel Silitonga, a senior church official in the district, said Muslim clerics and the Bogor Islam Defender's Front had provoked local residents to attack the churches. The churches had been meeting without complaints from their neighbors since 1997.

Twelve churches in Rancaekek, Bandung, were ordered to cease services in the first week of September, 2004.

People and dogs

Summer afternoon

Berta Hosmar

I was relaxing on the deck of our trailer one August afternoon while contemplating the fact that so many dedicated teenagers here have made it possible to enjoy the peace and quiet. We lease a site at Fair Havens Campground and Bible Conference near Beaverton, Ontario, and because of the excellent programs this ministry offers to young and old, we occasionally take grandchildren along for a few days. We enroll them in the various programs and we don't have to worry about their safety. Today we had taken our nine-year-old grandson Levi, and his friend Cameron along.

Their counselors are mostly teenagers, and we can't appreciate them enough.

Our home in Whitby borders on a public park. When our children grew up, the park had not been developed yet, and several acres of tall grasses and wildflowers proved to be a paradise for our kids and their friends.

Here they could build their forts, pick wild strawberries or play games, and none of the parents on our street worried about the safety of their offspring.

Sadly, times have changed. The park now boasts a baseball diamond, two playgrounds and a bike path, but it just isn't safe anymore to let young children play there without adult supervision.

Especially on weekends it can be pretty noisy in the park late at night, and on more than one occasion the police have had to intervene and break up a rowdy teenager party. While mowing the lawn we often find empty beer bottles and other litter under our Colorado pine trees. And it does not surprise our neighbors or us when we discover signs of vandalism on our properties, like rotten tomatoes on our patios or eggs smashed against our windows. Occasionally cars have been broken into, or garden furniture stolen or misplaced.

You can't generalize, and we know that well-behaved, responsible teenagers far outnumber the troublemakers, only it seems that where we live we meet more of the latter.

I had almost dozed off when Levi and Cameron came running. Something was upsetting them, for Levi was crying.

Levi lost his hearing when he was five years old. Through the miracle of science and technology he received a cochlear implant, and we praise God for Levi can now once again live in the "hearing world."

His hearing is by no means perfect and has limitations, but to see the once so confused and traumatized little boy transformed into the happy, outgoing child he was before he became deaf, can bring tears of thankfulness to my eyes.

But something was very wrong, for Levi, visibly frightened, was carrying the implant in his hands.

"What happened?" My husband asked, trying to appear calm, while I felt a sudden stab of fear, for we both realized that the implant wasn't working properly.

The device is worn around the ear, like a hearing aid, and under no circumstances may the tiny computer inside get wet.

Once Levi forgot that he was wearing it and dove into our pool, and to replace it costs thousands of dollars.

He has to take the implant off while playing sports or swimming or taking a shower or going to bed, and then he is profoundly deaf, but it's amazing how quickly Levi has adapted to his handicap.

"Our group with our counselors were having a water balloon fight and Levi stayed away from them but lots of kids were pushing and by accident Levi's implant came off and fell into the barrel with the balloons," explained Cameron. "There was some water in the barrel, and the implant got a little bit wet."

Meanwhile, Levi rushed into our trailer and immediately removed the tiny batteries and replaced them with new ones. He kept crying and saying: "It wasn't my fault! I was careful and now it makes a funny ringing sound!"

We realized again that without the implant he can't hear himself talking.

Moments later we all breathed a sigh of relief when Levi put it on again and we saw the delighted smile on his face.

"It's working, I can hear you again!" he shouted.

To make him forget the scary experience, my husband took the two boys to the cafeteria for an ice cream cone, while I went back to my lawn chair, still a little shaky.

But I had barely made myself comfortable when three teenagers climbed on our deck and politely asked if they could join me for a little while.

"We're counselors here and we're following a course to make us better equipped to work with the kids and to grow in our faith," a sixteen-year-old girl told me. "The leadership at Fair Havens encourages us to mix with the guests. May I give you my testimony?"

Pleasantly surprised, I marvelled at the maturity of my three guests.

"I started working here by cleaning the toilets," chuckled the other girl. "Next I'll probably work with the toddlers."

Then the only male, also a sixteen-year-old, asked hesitantly:" Do you have any concerns or some reasons for joy that you don't mind sharing with us? I'd like to pray with you."

I told him what had just happened to our grandson, and without hesitation or any sign of embarrassment he began to pray.

He interceded for all children with physical or mental disabilities, and there was such compassion and understanding in his prayer that I had no difficulty visualizing him as a future pastor.

When my guests left, I realized again that God cares for his church from generation to generation.

Berta Hosmar is a freelance writer living in Whitby, Ontario, who has contributed to CC for many years.

Intangible Things
Heidi VanDerSlikke

A dog's life

Dogs are my favorite animal, especially Scottish collies. I love the way they look, with their slender, pointy noses and their fluffy manes. I love how they prance, and I love their goofy but loyal dispositions.

For 12 years we had a Lassie look-alike named Dusty. He grew up with my kids, lived a good life, and died at a ripe old age for a collie. A few months later we brought home a handsome tri-colored pup and called him Harley. (Jack had his Suzuki and I had my Harley.) He grew into a strong, beautiful pooch, with a passion for chasing anything that moved, especially geese and killdeer.

Maybe that's what he was doing one night when he was nine months old and ran onto the busy highway in front of our farm. It was a fatal mistake and his death broke all of our hearts.

So last year about this time we brought home another puppy, a sable-colored half-brother to Harley. His name is Rocky. He started out looking like a fluffy football with a wet nose, but a year later he's a muscular animal, capable of covering the length of a 50 acre field in short order. Like his predecessor, he has more energy than brains, which gets him into a fair amount of trouble.

Since we didn't want to repeat our experience with Harley, Rocky spent a lot of time in the kennel, unless someone was out on the yard, able to play with him. But a dog his size needs a lot of exercise, or he drives his owners crazy. I ended up walking him three times a day, seven days a week, regardless of weather. That kept both of us in good shape, but obviously it was time consuming.

Then we heard about Invisible Fence.

Simply explained, Invisible Fence is an electronic system with a transmitter that sends out a low voltage signal to a wire buried around the yard. The dog wears a receiver on his collar. When he approaches the boundary zone, he receives an auditory signal – a beeping sound – that tells him to return to the safe area. If he doesn't retreat, he receives a "correction." That's a nice way of saying he gets zapped with a tingling sensation similar to those felt by cattle on an electric fence, until he goes back to the safe zone. It amounts to an "invisible fence," twelve feet wide and eight feet high. Everything about the system was appealing – except the price. An invisible dog would have been cheaper.

Then one day while I was washing the car, Rocky managed to open the kennel gate and proudly danced up along side of me. Jack showed me how make the latch more secure and told me to call the invisible salesman ASAP. With trembling hands I signed the contract, noting the "100% money-back guarantee." The only stipulation was that training be done exactly as demonstrated on the accompanying video.

So for 4 days, 5 times a day, Rocky and I spent 10 minutes approaching the boundary at various points. The instant he received the "beep," we retreated and celebrated as if we had just discovered the cure for the common cold.

Frankly, I felt like a complete idiot. I just hoped people driving by didn't notice me repeatedly running up to the invisible edge, retreating from a sound I couldn't hear, as if my life depended on it, and then telling my dog in a high-pitched voice (because that's what dogs like), what a genius he was.

But it worked. Rocky soon understood the rules of the "game." On the fifth day he received his first correction, as per the instruction video. Following that, it didn't take long for Rocky to recognize and respect his new boundaries. As a result he is footloose and fancy free on the barnyard these days, but still protected from ever running off the yard or onto the road. In the process, he virtually exercises himself, so we need only go for a walk once a day. If I do more than that, it's purely for pleasure.

It may seem odd, especially to non-dog lovers, but the whole affair smacks of homiletic possibilities to me. I've been reading the Pauline epistles recently, and have been reminded that Christians are prone to either flagrantly disrespect our God-given boundaries, running roughshod over God's grace, or cower under our own self-imposed set of rules in order to make sure we don't cross the line and inadvertently incur the wrath of God. Either one is a serious mistake.

By nature, we may desire to turn off the transmitter and go play on the highway for awhile. Doing so could easily cause us injury, if not cost us life itself. On the other hand, if we were to cringe timidly on the back step, we do a disservice to the high price paid for our freedom. We miss the many blessings our heavenly Father has in mind for us, and we lack the exercise he intended for our health and well-being.

So the idea is that we need to take the training seriously, understand the rules as they are, (without making up our own), and then go and enjoy the freedom and benefits of life in Christ. After all, Jesus himself said, "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full," (John 10:10b). What more could his dearly loved children want?

Heidi VanderSlikke lives in Harriston, Ont. Her email: hmvanderslikke @hotmail.com

Reflection

Wisdom

Mart De Haan

According to Buddhist folklore, two traveling monks reached a river where they met a young woman. Wary of the current, she asked if they could carry her across. One of the monks hesitated, but the other quickly picked her up onto his shoulders, transported her across the water, and put her down on the other bank. She thanked him and departed. As the monks continued on their way, the one was brooding and preoccupied. Unable to hold his silence, he spoke out. "Brother, our spiritual training teaches us to avoid any contact with women, but you picked that one up on your shoulders and carried her!" "Brother," the second monk replied, "I set her down on the other side, while you are still carrying her."

A Question of Wisdom

The insight of the second monk raises an interesting question for followers of Christ. If we acknowledge examples of moral and spiritual insight in another religion, do we weaken our case for the distinctiveness of our own faith?

I ask the question because I believe we actually strengthen our case by seeing that one of the things the Bible does is help us see wisdom outside of its own pages. By being our inspired standard for wisdom, the Bible shows how to recognize (1) natural, (2) religious, and (3) moral insights in the world around us. Most important, the Scriptures show us how these first three kinds of wisdom can help us see our need for (4) the redemptive wisdom of the cross.

Let's take a closer look at how the first three kinds of wisdom can help us build bridges to those outside of our faith, without compromising the distinctiveness of Christ in the process.

Natural Wisdom

The Old Testament book of Proverbs gives us examples of practical insights that abound in the cultures and religions of the world. Solomon's wisdom shows us how to learn from the animals, from agriculture, and from personal reflection on how life works. Many of his wise sayings illustrate the value of a natural wisdom that can also be found in other religions.

Wise is the one who is not too big to learn from the ant (Proverbs 6:6-8). The most important battles are fought in the mind (Proverbs 16:32; 25:28).

A benefit of such natural wisdom is that it can help anyone live a more thoughtful life. A downside is that natural wisdom does not by itself give us hope in a world where all of our accomplishments are subject to change and loss (Ecclesiastes 1:1-11).

Religious Wisdom

People of many cultures have found it difficult to think that the wonders of the natural world have no counterpart on the other side of death. As a result, many religions have tried to give their followers hope beyond the grave. While the following quotes are from the Bible, they have parallels in other religious systems.

Those who hope only in this life are destined for despair (Ecclesiastes 2:15-20). Nothing is more relevant than the eternal (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14).

By believing in life after death, people of many religions have found courage to make sacrifices for a better world beyond. But eternal perspectives have also been a problem. By minimizing the importance of this life, many have wasted the earth's resources, waged unnecessary wars, and sacrificed their lives at the expense of others. Religious wisdom does not make people good merely by offering the hope of immortality.

Moral Wisdom

From Moses to Jesus, the Scriptures show that spirituality without morality can result in everything from false gods to religious exploitation of the poor. According to the Bible, moral wisdom is so important that our Creator wrote his laws not only in stone, but also in our hearts (Romans 2:14-15). The result is that the Bible resonates with a universal human conscience when it says things like, Do to others as you would have them do to you (Matthew 7:12). Don't return evil for evil but overcome evil with good (Romans 12:21).

Once again, however, we are faced with an insight that is incomplete. When we think about the moral wisdom of love, our problem is not so much in knowing but in doing. No matter how much we want to love, we easily slide into self-centered thinking that causes us to hurt and be hurt. None of us gives or receives as much love as our hearts long for.

Redemptive Wisdom

Because we are all wounded people, we need more than natural, religious, and moral wisdom to do the right thing. We need a redemptive insight to help us deal with the wrongs we have done to others and that others have done to us.

This was the kind of wisdom Jesus offered when he stepped into our broken world and said, "Come to me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).

Those who are well don't need a doctor, but those who are sick. I have not come to call good people, but sinners to repentance (Mark 2:17).

Christ's invitation to hurting, helpless people was not new. For centuries, Jewish prophets had been declaring that the most high God lives not only in the heavens but also in the dark valleys of crushed and shattered people who recognize their desperate need of him (Psalm 34:18; Isaiah 57:15).

What was new with Christ was that at the crossroads of the world, and on the center page of human history, God unveiled the secret of his redemptive wisdom. By an act of immeasurable love, our Creator became our substitute, dying in our place, for our sin (1 Corinthians 1:17-31).

Wisdom doesn't get more profound than this. The darkest, most tragic moment of human history became the means by which our Creator could offer us the light of his Spirit, his forgiveness, and his everlasting life.

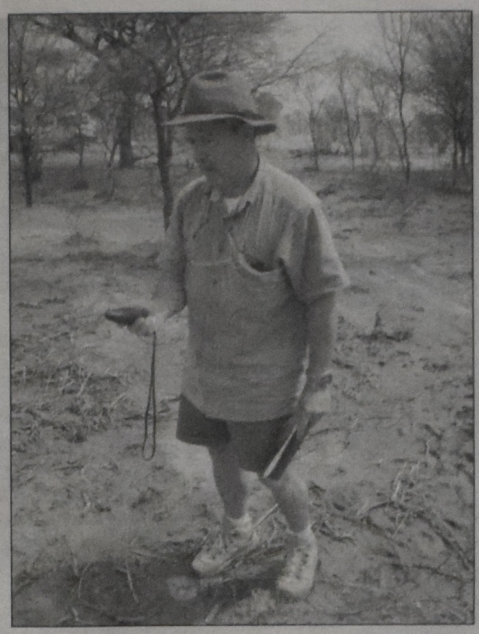
By the redemptive wisdom of Christ, wasted, ruined, and hopeless people learn to love as they have been loved, to forgive as they have been forgiven, and to salvage as they have been salvaged.

Father in heaven, your Son is known for rescuing the kind of people we are inclined to condemn. Something has gone terribly wrong. Please don't let us rest until we too are showing every day, and in every way, the redemptive wisdom of the cross.

Mart De Haan, Been Thinking About Wisdom, *Copyright 2004 by RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, Michigan. Reprinted by permission. Mart De Haan is president of RBC Ministries and writes his "Been Thinking About" column once a month online at: www.gospelcom.net/rbc/*

A Frenchman who can see water beneath the Sahara

Abraham McLaughlin



IRIBA, CHAD – Out here in the sandy moonscape of eastern Chad, you don't expect to see a diminutive Frenchman with an Indiana Jones hat marching around, muttering, and staring at his global-positioning device.

But Alain Gachet has come here to outdo generations of witch doctors, water diviners, and PhDs. He aims to pinpoint, with scientific certainty, the right places to dig the costly wells that pull precious water from beneath the sand.

And this isn't some academic exercise. About 200,000 refugees have fled to Chad from Sudan's violent Darfur region. They each need four gallons of water a day, the United Nations says – or a total of about 25 swimming pools in a land that gets no rain for months on end. At a time when nearly 1 out of every 5 people in the world is without adequate drinking water, Mr. Gachet could help save countless lives.

Gachet says he's up to the task, due, oddly enough, to the space shuttle and the end of the cold war. Working in his 15th-century chateau in France, he fused together an unprecedented set of maps, including newly released topographic ones from the shuttle and previously unavailable radar ones that peer 20 yards underground. Now he's put the data into his GPS device. When he says, "Dig here!" Aid workers listen.

So far, the half dozen wells drilled under his direction have hit water. His data has also been key, UN officials say, in picking new sites for refugee camps. Several older camps were set up far from water, causing great complications for refugees and aid workers.

Gachet's work is "a revolution – in terms of water, the most important thing to happen in 20 years," says Ben Harvey, a water specialist for the International Rescue Committee at the Oure Cassoni refugee camp near the northern Chadian town of Bahai.

Mr. Harvey notes that the site for the Oure Cassoni camp, home to about 17,000 refugees, was chosen because it's near a small lake. Yet it's also dangerously close to the Chad-Sudan border, making the refugees susceptible to further attacks. Janjaweed militia, who've been implicated in the killing of 30,000 to 50,000 Sudanese civilians in Darfur, regularly come to water their horses at the lake. It makes Oure Cassoni a risky place – but one that, at least, has water. Gachet's technology is allowing camps to be set up in safer locations away from the border.

In general, water-divining experts, known as hydrologists, succeed anywhere from 65 percent to 80 percent of the time. Out here, in the nearly all-sand terrain of eastern Chad, that rate has been as low as 50 percent. And big wells needed for refugee camps are expensive – about $6,000. If wells fail, water has to be trucked in. Tankers cost $350 a day and often get stuck in mud or sand.

That's where Gachet and his GPS come in.

His timing, he says, was perfect. As the cold war ended, lots of secret technology became available to civilians: GPS devices, satellite maps, computer-mapping

See **Frenchman** *on page 13...*

The Lord's Prayer – Give us today our daily bread (2)

Sculptured panel from a Dutch Church.

J.H. Sillevis Smitt
Translated by Jack Van Meggelen

It helped me a lot to pray this petition one word at a time. That way I was struck over and again both by the unexpected beauty of this petition and by its unexpected difficulties.

Let us first look at the word *"give."* We can utter this word in two ways. We can ask or we can demand. We can dictate or we can pray. Our natural tendency is to utter this word as a demand. We demand our rights. One of the basic human rights we claim is the right to respectable living. We demand food and drink and a roof over our heads. Labor relations have pretty much boiled down to stated demands, and if the employer does not *give*, then the workers will *take*, by force if necessary, what they say is rightfully theirs. Give or I'll take!

The rich have brought this attitude down on themselves because they have always considered it their right to take, at whatever cost to others. Therefore, when the masses of workers began to demand and threaten to take, even by means of revolution, what they considered their due, they only repeated what the rich had been doing for centuries.

Demanding our rights

Humanity knows all about its rights. But what exactly are our rights? When we really search our hearts critically we might come to the conclusion that we deserve a good drubbing. The consequences of our actions elicit God's judgement on us and a demand for penalty payments for our folly.

We demand our rights, and quickly state what we have accomplished 'with our own hands' and what we have earned with 'our own brains' and 'our good planning'.

But did you make your hands? Did you make them strong? Did you create your own intellect?

Did you give yourself good judgment? Did you give the rain in season, and did you make the earth fruitful? Did you design the grains of wheat to sprout in the spring? Did you force the mighty waters to run to the sea?

Jesus teaches us something different. He teaches us to pronounce the little word *"give"* prayerfully. Not by demanding but by pleading. Then this little word will mean something completely different. It will confess that my bread is not my right, but a good gift from my Father's generous hand. So is my health to eat the food. It also means that, ultimately, it is not others who will rule if I don't take my rights in my own hand, but it is God who rules. I do not want to be arrogant and proud, as if I can maintain my life and the needs to support it. All my surety lies in the hands of the Lord.

Give – that also means that I will not trust in my salary or position, an inheritance or lottery winnings. I will not put my trust in my savings and assets or my indexed pension. Nor will I trust in my health and my mind. I will not rely on my muscles and good looks, nor my experience to see me through. I will not look to the left or the right nor trust in others for my peace of mind. I will not trust in the goodwill of insiders nor in personal connections to reach my safeguarded objectives.

I am weak and totally dependent on the Lord. I will focus all my attention on him to lead me and provide in my life. He has the whole world in his hands.

Asking for others

Next the words *"us, our"*.

We find the two words *"us"* and *"our"* in this one petition. It is as if the Lord wants to impress on us not to forget our neighbours, our community when we pray for our daily bread. As if the Lord wants to warn us that our innate egotism plays such a powerful role exactly for the struggle to obtain our daily bread.

When you pray, *give us,* you're in fact saying that you don't ask this only for yourself but also for your neighbors, as much for them as you would want for yourself: please care for others as much as you care for me.

From the beginning the world has seen a struggle between rich and poor; between the haves and the have-nots. Now Jesus teaches the haves to pray for the needs of the have-nots. To pray for those who serve them, and who work for them. Jesus teaches employers to pray for the employees. He teaches employees to pray for employers. He teaches us to pray for the competition.

When that happens the issue of wages is no longer solely in the hands of the employer. And the decision to strike is no longer an issue only for the employees. *We* have called upon *our* heavenly Father to come and intercede on behalf of our neighbors, and to distribute to them as they need. In these two words *give us* we proclaim that we wish to love our neighbor, rich or poor, as much as we love ourselves.

When bosses and workers begin to pray this together will there still be a social problem? What do you think?

Today and tomorrow

Next the word *"today."*

We are often foolish creatures. Time can be divided into past, present and future.

The past is past, your boat of life has traveled that part of the stream and it is be-

hind you. The past is gone and cannot be revisited. As far as the future is concerned, it is unpredictable and unsure. We don't know even for a split second what will happen next in our life. Both past and future are completely outside our control.

Yet we, and the whole world with us, have the irresistible urge to be very busy with either the past or the future. I'm not saying that we must have no regard for the past, nor think about the future, that would not be correct. I just want to say that the present is upon us with a clarity and urgency we can act on now. That is why Jesus says so emphatically,

So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. (Matt. 6:31-34)

He teaches us to live one day at a time.

There are many embittered people who ignore the present and destroy all hope for tomorrow because they foolishly persist in living only in the past.

There are many others who are so focused on the future that *today* slips through their fingers unnoticed. Anxiety is a great burden and it tortures millions. Worrying is basically an inability or unwillingness to live by the day, but always projecting on *tomorrow*. Jesus places us in the present. He presses on us the task that is before us here and now.

He speaks of a God who wants to remove our past and cleanse it. He speaks of a Father in heaven who knows our needs for tomorrow. He asks of us that we do now what God requires of us today, which is two things, to love and to work as stewards of this creation.

We so eagerly work towards ensuring our future security. But the building up of our assets can in the final analysis be just a form of a practical atheism, a denial of God.

Jesus teaches us to pray *"Give us today."* I am satisfied when I have enough 'today'. The God who cares for me today, is the one who will be the same tomorrow. He gives the same love, the same care with the same faithfulness. Jesus teaches us here to rely, unconditionally, on the care of our Father in heaven who completely covers our needs everyday and everywhere.

Being satisfied

Our daily bread. We could translate this phrase by calling it our *sufficient* bread. We ask for bread and no more. Just our bread, not even with butter and certainly not a Dagwood sandwich.

Is that what we really want, just bread and only for one day? Can we be satisfied with so little? Can we be so moderate in our appetite and desires? Imagine if God heard your prayer and answered it, literally and immediately? Would that please you?

I'm not commenting here on life insurance and pension plans. I am saying that our *trust in God* is a revolutionary power, and that we gain the peace that passes understanding under the caring love of our heavenly Father only when we are able to reject any overwhelming desire to rely on our own safeguards for the future.

Two Questions

When I review the petition, *"Give us this day our daily bread,"* I notice that these words can only be spoken when they arise from a heart that is controlled and motivated by dependence, community awareness, trust and moderation.

Thus I again ask those two questions. *Can* you pray this? And do you *want* to pray this?

We feeble human beings, driven by our disturbing ambitions and fantasies, tend to dash from one absolute certainty and security to another. We squirrel away provisions and savings in numerous ways. But our storehouses of supplies amount to nothing as much as egocentric and selfish attempts to ward off ever threatening fears of famine and want.

However there is really only one security in life which never lets us down. The security that comes from trust in the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Our heavenly Father who knows that we need all these things.

Jesus teaches us to pray, "Lord protect me from want, teach me moderation, and make me share with others."

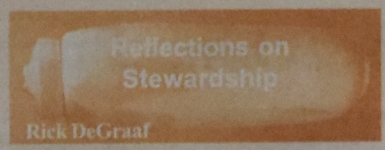
Can you pray this? Do you *want* to pray this?

Do you want to reject everything relating to human security and place your life and your goods in the hands of your Father in heaven?

Do you want to stand in the marketplace prepared to reach out and dole out to others of the wealth and riches that God has given you in abundance?

Lord teach us to pray: *"Give us today our daily bread."*

Connecting with God: giving my heart



In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the Lord. But Abel brought fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The Lord looked with favor on Abel and his offering. Gen. 4:3,4.

My wife and I used to keep sheep on our farm. The scriptures are full of sheep metaphors and illustrations and we had the privilege of experiencing some of them in real life. When I think of what Abel did, select from his best to give to the Lord, my business sense says, Abel you've made a mistake. It would have been better for you to keep the best ones to breed and develop your flock. In that way you'll be better able to provide for your family but also for future giving. But that's not what Abel did!

His offering is contrasted with that of his brother, who took the initiative. Cain thought it would be a good idea to bring an offering. But, it seems to me, Cain was pretty casual about it. Maybe he thought something like this: I should bring an offering to the Lord. (Maybe it was a practice that Adam and Eve started after being kicked out of the garden). Oh, here is something I can offer – here Lord, here's your offering.

As I reflect on his intentions, it sounds so much like the one-talented servant in the parable of the Talents – here, Master, here is what belongs to you!

But contrast that to Abel. He does a dumb thing from a business perspective: he offers one of his best lambs and then offers what was considered to be the most valuable part. Someone once said to me, what difference does it make; when burnt on the altar, the prized lamb and the runt of the flock will burn and smoke the same!

But Abel followed his heart – a heart that yearned to be more closely connected with God. Cain, on the other hand, was practical: I've got to do this, since I need God's blessing of rain for my crops and so on.

In your stewardship (use and care of all God's gifts to you) and in your giving (what you set aside specifically for Kingdom purposes), ask yourself is your stewardship and giving a heart-felt thing? Is your giving like Cain's or Abel's?

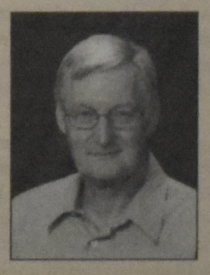
God is looking for our heart. He really doesn't need you or me to supply him through our giving (see Ps. 50). God is looking for the giver's heart – a heart that wants to connect with him. Faithful stewardship and giving pleases God when it comes from the heart.

God saw through the offerings that Cain and Abel brought, but he only accepted Abel's. It led to jealousy and death. God too gave, out of poverty – for he had only one son to give. God's heart was in his giving!

Stewardly Tip: Leverage your giving (income taxpayers only). Giving should be from the heart, not because of the tax advantage. When you give, however, you can make your giving do more by making sure that your giving to your church or other charitable organization is recorded. Even toonies add up if you give more than $200 per year. In Ontario, the federal tax credit for donations is 29% and the Ontario tax credit is 17.41% – which adds up to a combined credit of 46.41%. A tooney given every Sunday means 52 toonies in a year. If you had your toonies recorded and you faithfully gave back the money you save on your tax return, you would be able to add another 24 toonies to your giving the next year.

Readers: We want to share your 'Stewardly Tips' so that we all can do our part to make better use of the resources God has entrusted to us. Please write or email or visit the CC website. Please leave your contact information so that we can acknowledge your contribution or, if we need to, we can ask you for more details.

Next issue:
Year-end Gifts to Charity



Rick DeGraaf works for Christian Stewardship Services, Markham, Ont. Rick's email: rickd@csservices.ca

Frenchman

.... Continued from page 11

software, among others. With this technology, and from the comfort of Provence, he can hunt for gold deposits in Africa or spot leaks in pipelines for oil-company clients.

And in Chad, based on Gachet's data, the UN has rejected seven sites for new refugee camps. "It's saved us months of running around and drilling test wells," says Geoff Wordley, a senior UN emergency officer. Without Gachet's data, he adds, "We might as well be using divining rods."

When one camp, called Am Nabak, became unsustainable because of a lack of water, Gachet used his maps to find a new site 12 miles away. Now it's got plenty of water.

Still, there are limits to his data. The biggest is that it can't tell how much water is at a site – just that there is water there. That means aid workers never know how long one of Gachet's wells will continue to produce water.

Nonetheless, the potential could help in other places, experts say, as water becomes a major global concern. To tackle these problems, says the ever upbeat Gachet, "All we need is more imagination" to put the new technology to good use.

Abraham McLaughlin is a writer for The Christian Science Monitor.

[The CRWRC is also present in the same region providing aid for Darfur refugees. Lambert Hunse of St. Catharines, Ontario is there coordinating water and sanitation projects.]

Mission

Teaching English and more at the roof of the world

Sonya VanderVeen Feddema

Yak butter tea. Prayer flags. Prostrate Buddhist worshippers. Fierce-faced idols. Work units. High altitudes. Monks in flowing burgundy robes debating in a monastery. Burning incense. And staring faces.

All these things, and many more, won't seem strange to Dave Hoogendam, 26, when he returns to Tibet from his home in Vineland, Ontario for a second year of teaching English. Sent there by a mission organization, his ultimate goal, and that of his teammates, is to form relationships with Tibetans and to be a quiet, subtle witness for Christ in an Autonomous Region and Communist country dominated by Tibetan Buddhism. This form of Buddhism is a merging of Buddhism as it was practiced in India and the Bon religion, which is native to Tibet.

Dave and Stephanie with some nuns drinking yak butter tea.

According to the prayer guide *Strongholds of Central Tibetans*, "Bon is an animistic and shamanistic religion that finds spirits in every object and seeks to control them through offerings or rituals. In the beginning of Buddhism coming to Tibet, the religion could not defeat the demons of the Bon religion, so a master teacher called on these spirits to protect Buddhism in the land of Tibet."

In the 1950s China "peacefully liberated" Tibet, called the "roof of the world" because of its average elevation of 14,000 feet. In 1959 when Tibetans, who had been an independent or semi-independent state for years, rebelled against Chinese rule, 87,000 Tibetans were killed in the uprising. Tenzin Gyatso, the 14th Dalai Lama whom Tibetans consider to be the reincarnation of the Buddha of Compassion and the guide to salvation (nirvana), fled to exile in India.

Potala, former palace of the Dalai Lama. It contains 1,000 rooms and 10,000 altars.

In 1989 he won the Nobel Peace Prize. Now 69 years old, and no longer their official leader, Tibetans still consider him a god and many long to make the pilgrimage to see him. But the Communists, who preach atheism and attempt to control all religions, don't allow Tibetans to mention the Dalai Lama's name or to display his picture in their homes.

Hoogendam, a graduate of Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan, is convinced that watchful Communist officials know that he and his teammates are Christians. But as long as they don't foment revolution or ruffle feathers, they are left alone. Foreigners who have been too overt about sharing Christianity have not had their visas renewed.

As Dave teaches his students English, certain contexts provide an opportunity for him to talk about Christianity. For example, because students are interested in Western culture, they want to learn about Easter and Christmas and how and why they are celebrated. After classes Dave also accompanies his students to the local tea houses, keeping his eyes open for opportunities to discuss Christianity.

Sometimes students visit him in his apartment, where a picture of Jesus and Scripture are displayed. But, Dave explains, questions about Christianity are few and far between.

"Tibetans are really set in their own religion," he says. "What I really want you to understand is that to be Tibetan is to be Tibetan Buddhist. If these people became Christians and discontinued their Buddhist practices, what kind of family or social structure would they have?"

Aware of several Tibetan Christians who meet in a cell group, Dave explains that life is difficult for them. "It's a Communist country and you are expected to serve the country and the party. There's no time for this other religion. Local Christians could be jailed, beaten, or killed. That's why we don't worship with them."

Dave and other foreign Christians meet every other Friday for prayer, interceding for Tibet and the people they have met, and on Sundays to worship in teammates' apartments.

In the city of Lhasa, Tibet's capital city, Dave belongs to a work unit consisting of sixty researchers – who are paid by the Chinese government to research Tibetan culture, language, and history – and four foreign teachers who teach adults – policemen, businesswomen, professors, judges, and others – to speak English. Dave explains that work units, established by the People's Republic of China, structure some societal groups in the cities.

Tibet typical home – white-washed walls & black framed windows.

For instance, everyone who works for the bank – along with their extended families – lives in a bank work unit consisting of adjoining houses in a walled-in compound, creating neighborhoods of sorts. A gatekeeper monitors who comes and goes. Within that structure, workers' and their families' needs – housing, education, and more – are taken care of. Members are guaranteed jobs no matter how much or how little they produce in a year. However, if they want to move to another city they must first be accepted by another work unit there.

Many people want to belong to the Communist Party work unit because the pay is substantial and members can more easily transfer to different cities.

Dave's time is divided between teaching English and studying. For 12 hours a week he teaches two separate classes. And two mornings a week he is learning how to speak the Tibetan language. While in Tibet he is also earning a Master's degree in Missions and Intercultural Studies from an American Christian college and finds his studies particularly relevant to his work in Tibet.

"I'm taking a course on spiritual conflict," he explains. "Being in Tibet has made me really aware of its existence. Tibetan Buddhists have idols in their houses and they are terrified of the spirit world. They are always talking to lamas or shaman to get advice for any big decisions. I've heard it said that Tibet is a dark place – spiritually, that is – though it's gotten better through the last 15 years."

Dave engages in spiritual warfare through prayer, and has grown in his realization of the importance of maintaining his personal walk with God.

There is a lack of compassion and concern for others in Tibetan society, observes Dave. Because a Tibetan Buddhist attempts to gain good karma, or merit, so that he will be reincarnated in a better life after his death, any thing he does is motivated not by kindness but by selfishness. For instance, if a person gives a beggar a coin, it is not because of the beggar's need, but because of his own need to accumulate merit. Dave quips, "I don't know who keeps track."

Because of this lack of love and interest in the well-being of others, he notes that it's an important witness for Christ when he and his teammates get along. "Showing love to each other has a big impact on the local people. They see we do things differently than they do."

Carefully and discreetly Dave tries to make his students question the fallacies of their faith. For example, he might talk to them about an exhibit of Buddha in the Potala Palace, the former residence of the Dalai Lama, a site they consider holy. When the exhibit is closed because the Buddha is being painted, he might try to help them see that someone made the Buddha and someone has to paint it to maintain its upkeep.

"They don't see the irony of the Buddha being painted," Dave notes.

In order to minister to the Tibetan Buddhists, he practices a method that he was taught by a missionary. "Ask them questions," he says. "And when they've answered one, think of another question for the next time you see them. Get to know them. Show humility. Show that you want to learn about their culture and religion. That helps you to know where they are coming from. As they answer those questions you hope that they will see that their religion doesn't make sense — that they will see the holes in their arguments."

Dave and his teammates can only hope and pray that the Tibetan Buddhists who build "holy" piles of stones with prayers written on them and with prayer flags on top of them will learn that Jesus is the only way to salvation, and that the pilgrims who travel from their homes – laying prostrate on the ground body length by body length in order to gain merit – till days later they arrive at the Jokhang Temple in Lhasa, will realize that nothing can be done to earn God's free gift of salvation in Jesus Christ.

Godly people versus poverty

Tony Campolo

No one who reads the Bible seriously can escape the fact that there is a special place in the heart of God for the poor. More than two thousand verses of Scripture admonish God's people to care for the poor and to seek justice for the oppressed.

The prophets of the Hebrew Bible rant and rail against those who stuff themselves with food until they are overweight while others suffer and die from hunger each day. In the New Testament, Jesus initiates his ministry by declaring that he has come to bring "good news to the poor" (Luke 4:18). And the only description Jesus gives of judgment day tells us we will be evaluated on how we responded to the needs of the poor (Matthew 25:31-46).

There are three ways Christians can respond faithfully to poverty, and each is important.

First, there is the requirement to respond on a personal and individualistic level. It has been said that, "if you can't change the whole world, you can change the world for one person." You can support a child in a developing country by making regular monthly contributions to one of the many child-sponsorship organizations.

I am personally involved with two of these groups. My wife and I support one child through Compassion International (www.compassion.com) and another through World Vision International (www.wvi.org). I have seen firsthand what each of these organizations delivers to needy children in developing nations. For 28 dollars a month, a child can be clothed, fed, and educated. [The CRC has a similar program supporting a family.]

Another way of addressing poverty is by joining in efforts to create jobs for the poor. I recently finished a speaking tour to promote Opportunity International, an organization that is doing just that. This faith-based program provides small loans and technical assistance to help third-world people (mostly women) start and run their own small businesses and cottage industries.

Over the last fifteen years, Opportunity International has created more than three million jobs in some of the most impoverished places in the world. When you consider that there are six persons in the average family of a developing nation, you realize that every job Opportunity International helps to create delivers six people from poverty-not for a day; not for a week; but for the rest of their lives. Ninety-eight percent of the money lent to these small enterprises is paid back, so these funds are lent out time and time again to support the development of new businesses. The president of the World Bank projects that Opportunity International will cut world poverty by as much as 10 percent by the year 2020. To learn more about Opportunity International, and how you can support their good work, visit www.opportunity.org or call 800-7WE-WILL.

Finally, there is much you can do on the macro level. Government policies dramatically affect the world's poor. Pressuring politicians to cancel third-world debt is one way you can help eliminate world poverty. Many developing nations are crippled by an overwhelming amount of debt. In some African nations, as much as forty cents of every tax dollar is sent to rich countries to service debts. Rather than providing health services, education, or programs for economic development to assist the desperately poor in these nations, these funds are sent overseas to pay the interest on loans from richer countries.

Uganda provides a good example of what can happen with debt cancellation. In 1996, the nation's foreign debt was cancelled and the money Uganda would have paid monthly to service its debts was used instead to address the AIDS crisis in the country. Programs to educate the public about HIV/AIDS were put in place. Medicines were provided. Counseling was made available. Within five years the incidence of new cases of AIDS dropped 30 percent, and the death rate from AIDS dropped 20 percent.

You can also lobby government officials to make sure that trade agreements with developing nations are fair. Rich countries like the US and Canada often subsidize the production of agricultural and industrial goods, making it impossible for third-world producers to compete on the world market. The Bible calls on worldly governments to act justly. It is the task of the church to remind the rulers of our age of their responsibility with respect to trade arrangements.

Some people say nothing can be done to reduce world poverty, but they are wrong. Since 1980, the proportion of the world's population living below the poverty level has been reduced by 25 percent. All the strategies I've outlined here have been part of this positive change. But such progress won't continue if good people stand back and do nothing. Don't waste your time wishing you could find a way to help. Get involved today!

Scared Sacred provides common ground

Getting Unstuck

Arlene Van Hove

It is 6:30 in the morning, and I am scrambling to get out of the door at 7:00 to stand in line for a film showing at 10:00. The Vancouver International Film Festival is on and I did not purchase tickets ahead of time. However, I am curious about this particular film because of a review in yesterday's local newspaper. I know it is sold out but they will sell tickets in case there are "no shows."

The morning is chilly and the traffic into Vancouver is slow. I arrive at 8:15. A few young people are already sitting by the door on the cold ground. They joke about having to juggle their work or studies to come to this film at this time of day. They keep themselves busy by doing artwork. A few more friends show up and also join the art activity while chatting quietly with each other.

Another friend shows up. He is tall and lean. He has a thoughtful look about him, as do the young people sitting on the ground. He also sits down and shows the group a magazine he is reading. They are all very interested. Eventually, he begins to read an article out loud while the others listen and continue their artwork.

A sacred moment

I am fascinated by what is going on in front of me. The young people seem to be Jewish and the article he is reading is about how the pain of the Jewish people is (or was) so intense because of the holocaust they are not (or were not) able to acknowledge the pain of the Palestinians. Throughout the reading I study their fresh young faces. Their eyes sparkle with enthusiasm. They are hospitable and share their bread and warm coffee from their thermos with one another. They are reflective and thoughtful in their talk. The article is about mutual pain.

I believe I am witnessing a sacred moment and I feel hope for our violent world.

Ten minutes before the film is to begin the manager tells us that most ticket holders showed up and he can only sell ten extra tickets. There are over eighty people standing in line. We are lucky; we just make it and the theatre is full.

Suffering and the sacred

The film I came to see is the documentary *Scared Sacred*, written, directed and produced by Velcro Ripper. He wanted to take a look at the relationship between fear and faith or suffering and the sacred. And so, he traveled the globe in search of stories of survivors of tragedies. In between various locations he would seek solace at mosques or monasteries.

In Bhopal, India he interviewed survivors of the Union Carbide pesticide factory accident that killed at least 8,000 (and killed twice more since it happened in 1984). In Cambodia, in the Killing Fields, he found a young man who had to watch his parents being killed by the Khmer Rouge and was forced to smile all the way through the experience. In Bosnia, in Sarajevo, he talked with an artist couple who lived among continuous carnage on Sniper's Alley. In Hiroshima, he met with a nuclear blast survivor. In Afghanistan (before the war) he discovered a young woman who was involved with an underground movement that supported education for women. In New York City just after the World Trade Centre attacks he talked with a Zen teacher. And in Israel he connected with a Jewish as well as a Palestinian family. Both had lost a child in their ongoing political conflict.

Creative survival

Everywhere he went he heard stories of people who did not give up and became involved in what Ripper calls "creative survival." And so he films the personal narratives of these people showing us how these suffering individuals process their pain.

The young man in Cambodia, who was trained by the Khmer Rouge to plant landmines, now spends his time searching for them and defusing them. A clinic is established in India for the survivors of the pesticide accidents. In Hiroshima, survivors suggest different cultures get to know one another better. Various victims also stress the need for compassion for other people.

But it was the Jewish and the Christian Palestinian families' response that has the potential to make our world especially a better place. They believe that if they "who paid the highest price possible" could talk together "anyone can!"

In conclusion, Ripper adds that ultimately no one can take away our freedom of how we choose to respond to whatever comes our way. The heroes of this film chose to grieve in a way that binds people together in healing ways.

In the context of so much violent terrorism in the world, this film is a gem and a breath of fresh air. It is about victims of violence but it does not perpetuate that genre. Rather, it tells stories of how men and women use their sorrows to transform themselves and make this world a better place. A sacred way of living that provides common ground within diversity. In a nutshell, the film offers hope and we may want to listen.

Arlene Van Hove is now on sabbatical from Cascade Christian Counselling Association in Surrey, B.C.

History

What the Crusades were really like: dispelling some myths

The Crusaders were not unprovoked aggressors, greedy marauders or medieval colonialists, as portrayed in some history books.

In fact, Thomas Madden, chair of St. Louis University's history department and author of *A Concise History of the Crusades*, contends that the Crusaders were a defensive force that did not profit from their ventures by earthly riches or land.

Madden shared some of the most popular myths about the Crusades and the modern findings that prove them wrong.

Q: What are some common misconceptions about the Crusades? The Crusaders?

Madden: The following are some of the most common myths and why they are wrong.

Myth 1: *The Crusades were wars of unprovoked aggression against a peaceful Muslim world.*

This is as wrong as wrong can be. From the time of Mohammed, Muslims had sought to conquer the Christian world. They did a pretty good job of it, too. After a few centuries of steady conquests, Muslim armies had taken all of North Africa, the Middle East, Asia Minor and most of Spain.

In other words, by the end of the 11th century the forces of Islam had captured two-thirds of the Christian world. Palestine, the home of Jesus Christ; Egypt, the birthplace of Christian monasticism; Asia Minor, where St. Paul planted the seeds of the first Christian communities – these were not the periphery of Christianity but its very core.

And the Muslim empires were not finished yet. They continued to press westward toward Constantinople, ultimately passing it and entering Europe itself. As far as unprovoked aggression goes, it was all on the Muslim side. At some point what was left of the Christian world would have to defend itself or simply succumb to Islamic conquest.

Myth 2: *The Crusaders wore crosses, but they were really only interested in capturing booty and land.* Their pious platitudes were just a cover for rapacious greed.

Historians used to believe that a rise in Europe's population led to a crisis of too many noble "second sons," those who were trained in chivalric warfare but who had no feudal lands to inherit. The Crusades, therefore, were seen as a safety valve, sending these belligerent men far from Europe where they could carve out lands for themselves at someone else's expense.

Crusaders romanticized.

Modern scholarship, assisted by the advent of computer databases, has exploded this myth. We now know that it was the "first sons" of Europe that answered the Pope's call in 1095, as well as in subsequent Crusades.

Crusading was an enormously expensive operation. Lords were forced to sell off or mortgage their lands to gather the necessary funds. Most were also not interested in an overseas kingdom. Much like a soldier today, the medieval Crusader was proud to do his duty but longed to return home.

After the spectacular successes of the First Crusade, with Jerusalem and much of Palestine in Crusader hands, virtually all of the Crusaders went home. Only a tiny handful remained behind to consolidate and govern the newly won territories.

Booty was also scarce. In fact, although Crusaders no doubt dreamed of vast wealth in opulent Eastern cities, virtually none of them ever even recouped their expenses. But money and land were not the reasons that they went on Crusade in the first place. They went to atone for their sins and to win salvation by doing good works in a faraway land.

They underwent such expense and hardship because they believed that by coming to the aid of their Christian brothers and sisters in the East they were storing up treasure where rust and moth cannot corrupt.

They were very mindful of Christ's exhortation that he who will not take up his cross is not worthy of Christ. They also remembered that "Greater love hath no man than this, than to lay down his life for his friends."

Myth 3: *When the Crusaders captured Jerusalem in 1099 they massacred every man, woman and child* in the city until the streets ran ankle deep with the blood.

This is a favorite used to demonstrate the evil nature of the Crusades.

It is certainly true that many people in Jerusalem were killed after the Crusaders captured the city. But this must be understood in historical context.

The accepted moral standard in all pre-modern European and Asian civilizations was that a city that resisted capture and was taken by force belonged to the victorious forces. That included not just the buildings and goods, but the people as well. That is why every city or fortress had to weigh carefully whether it could hold out against besiegers. If not, it was wise to negotiate terms of surrender.

In the case of Jerusalem, the defenders resisted right up to the end. They calculated that the formidable walls of the city would keep the Crusaders at bay until a relief force from Egypt could arrive. They were wrong. When the city fell, therefore, it was put to the sack. Many were killed; yet, many others were ransomed or allowed to go free.

By modern standards this may seem brutal. Yet a medieval knight would point out that many more innocent men, women and children are killed in modern bombing warfare than could possibly be put to the sword in one or two days. It is worth noting that in those Muslim cities that surrendered to the Crusaders the people were left unmolested, retained their property and were allowed to worship freely.

As for those streets of blood, no historian accepts them as anything other than a literary convention. Jerusalem is a big town. The amount of blood necessary to fill the streets to a continuous and running three-inch depth would require many more people than lived in the region, let alone the city.

Myth 4: *The Crusades were just medieval colonialism dressed up in religious finery.*

It is important to remember that in the Middle Ages the West was not a powerful, dominant culture venturing into a primitive or backward region. It was the Muslim East that was powerful, wealthy and opulent. Europe was the Third World.

The Crusader States, founded in the wake of the First Crusade, were not new plantations of Catholics in a Muslim world akin to the British colonization of America. Catholic presence in the Crusader states was always tiny, easily less than 10% of the population. These were the rulers and magistrates, as well as Italian merchants and members of the military orders. The overwhelming majority of the population in the Crusader states was Muslim.

They were not colonies, therefore, in the sense of plantations or even factories, as in the case of India. They were outposts. The ultimate purpose of the Crusader states was to defend the holy places in Palestine, especially Jerusalem, and to provide a safe environment for Christian pilgrims to visit those places.

There was no mother country with which the Crusader states had an economic relationship, nor did

History

Europeans economically benefit from them. Quite the contrary, the expense of Crusades to maintain the Latin East was a serious drain on European resources. As an outpost, the Crusader states kept a military focus.

While the Muslims warred against each other the Crusader states were safe, but once the Muslims united, they were able to dismantle the strongholds, capture the cities, and in 1291 expel the Christians completely.

Myth 5: *The Crusades were also waged against the Jews.*

No pope ever called a Crusade against Jews. During the First Crusade a large band of riffraff, not associated with the main army, descended on the towns of the Rhineland and decided to rob and kill the Jews they found there. In part this was pure greed. In part it also stemmed from the incorrect belief that the Jews, as the crucifiers of Christ, were legitimate targets of the war.

Pope Urban II and subsequent popes strongly condemned these attacks on Jews. Local bishops and other clergy and laity attempted to defend the Jews, although with limited success. Similarly, during the opening phase of the Second Crusade a group of renegades killed many Jews in Germany before St. Bernard was able to catch up to them and put a stop to it.

These misfires of the movement were an unfortunate by-product of Crusade enthusiasm, but they were not the purpose of the Crusades. To use a modern analogy, during the Second World War some American soldiers committed crimes while overseas. They were arrested and punished for those crimes. But the purpose of the Second World War was not to commit crimes.

Q: Do you think the struggle between the West and the Muslim world is in any way a reaction to the Crusades?

Madden: No. That may seem a strange answer when you consider that Osama bin Laden and other Islamists often refer to Americans as "Crusaders."

It's important to remember, though, that during the Middle Ages — really up until the late 16th century — the superpower of the Western world was Islam. Muslim civilizations were wealthy, sophisticated and immensely powerful. The West was backward and relatively weak.

It is noteworthy that with the exception of the First Crusade virtually every other Crusade launched by the West — and there were hundreds — was unsuccessful.

The Crusades may have slowed Muslim expansionism, but they in no way stopped it. Muslim empires would continue to expand into Christian territories, conquering the Balkans, much of Eastern Europe and even the greatest Christian city in the world, Constantinople.

From the Muslim perspective the Crusades were not worth noticing. If you had asked someone in the Muslim world about the Crusades in the 18th century he or she would have known nothing about them. They were important to Europeans because they were massive efforts that failed.

However, during the 19th century, when Europeans began conquering and colonizing Middle Eastern countries, many historians — in particular nationalist or royalist French writers — began to cast the Crusades as Europe's first attempt to bring the fruits of Western civilization to the backward Muslim world. In other words, the Crusades were morphed into imperialist wars.

Those histories were taught in the colonial schools and became the accepted view in the Middle East and beyond. In the 20th century, imperialism was discredited. Islamists and some Arab nationalists then seized on the colonial construction of the Crusades, claiming that the West was responsible for their woes because they had preyed on Muslims ever since the Crusades.

It is often said that people in the Middle East have long memories; it is true. But in the case of the Crusades, they have a recovered memory: one that was manufactured for them by their European conquerors.

Q: Are there any similarities between the Crusades and the war against terror today?

Madden: Aside from the fact that soldiers in both wars want to serve something greater than themselves that they hold dear and long to return home when it is over, I see no other similarities between the medieval Crusades and the war against terror. Motivations in a post-Enlightenment secular society are very different from those in the medieval world.

Q: How are the Crusades different from Islam's jihad, or other wars of religion?

Madden: The fundamental purpose of jihad is to expand the Dar al-Islam — the Abode of Islam — into the Dar al-Harb — the Abode of War. In other words, jihad is expansionistic, seeking to conquer non-Muslims and place them under Muslim rule.

Those who are then conquered are given a simple choice. For those who are not People of the Book — in other words, those who are not Christians or Jews — the choice is convert to Islam or die. For those who are People of the Book, the choice is submit to Muslim rule and Islamic law or die. The expansion of Islam, therefore, was directly linked to the military successes of jihad.

The Crusades were something very different. From its beginnings Christianity has always forbidden coerced conversion of any kind. Conversion by the sword, therefore, was not possible for Christianity. Unlike jihad, the purpose of the Crusades was neither to expand the Christian world nor to expand Christianity through forced conversions.

Instead, the Crusades were a direct and belated response to centuries of Muslim conquests of Christian lands. The immediate event that sparked the First Crusade was the Turkish conquest of all of Asia Minor in the 1070s through 1090s.

The First Crusade was called by Pope Urban II in 1095 in response to an urgent plea for help from the Byzantine emperor in Constantinople. Urban called the knights of Christendom to come to the aid of their Eastern brethren.

Asia Minor was Christian. Part of the Byzantine Empire, it had been first evangelized by St. Paul. St. Peter had been the first bishop of Antioch. Paul had written his famous letter to the Christians of Ephesus. The creed of the Church was penned at Nicaea. All of these were in Asia Minor.

The Byzantine emperor begged the Christians of the West for aid in recapturing these lands and expelling the Turks. The Crusades were that aid. Their purpose, though, was not only to reconquer Asia Minor but also to recapture other formerly Christian lands that had been lost due to Islamic jihads. This included the Holy Land.

In a nutshell, therefore, the major difference between Crusade and jihad is that the former was a defense against the latter. The entire history of the Eastern Crusades is one of response to Muslim aggression.

Q: Did the Crusaders have any success at converting the Muslim world?

Madden: I would note that in the 13th century some Franciscans began a mission in the Middle East to seek to convert Muslims. It was not successful, largely because Islamic law makes conversion to another religion a capital offense.

This attempt, though, was separate from the Crusades, which had nothing at all to do with conversion. And it was by peaceful persuasion.

Q: How did Christendom rationalize its defeat in the Crusades? Were the Crusaders defeated?

Madden: The same way that the Jews of the Old Testament did. God withheld victory from his people because they were sinful. This led to a large-scale piety movement in Europe, whose aim was to purify Christian society in every way.

Q: Did Pope John Paul II in fact apologize for the Crusades? Has he actually condemned them?

Madden: This is an odd myth, given that the Pope was so roundly criticized for failing to apologize directly for the Crusades when he asked forgiveness from all those that Christians had unjustly harmed.

The Pope did not condemn them, nor did he apologize for them. He apologized for the sins of Catholics. More recently it was widely reported that John Paul II apologized to the patriarch of Constantinople for the Crusader conquest of Constantinople in 1204.

In truth, though, the Pope only reiterated what his predecessor Pope Innocent III [1198-1216] said. That too was a tragic misfire that Innocent had done everything he could to avoid. He apologized for the sins of Catholics who took part in the Crusades. Yet he did not apologize for the Crusades themselves or even the outcome of the Crusades.

This article provided by Zenit, a Catholic news agency. See: www.zenit.org

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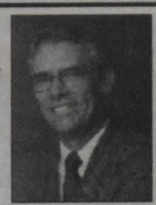

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Opinion

Yes ... but

Bert Hielema

The cost of energy dependence

A couple of weeks ago I was in Bar Harbor Maine, a beautiful resort town surrounded by Acadia National Park, where we, my wife and I, walked for hours along the Atlantic Ocean on a beautiful fall day, eating our lunch overlooking that great water body, where lately so many hurricanes have ravished its more southerly shores.

Back in town, looking for a good cup of coffee, we found a 'better than Tim Horton' coffee shop. There the attendant, a young man, drew our attention to a letter fastened to the counter and pointed to a passage referring to the military draft, soon to be reintroduced according to this memo. I invited him to come to Safe Harbor Canada, but he claimed that our fair land would be the next target of invasion.

What if...

I expressed my doubts about this, but then we live in crazy times. Reflecting on this episode now, it made me think. What if Canada were Iraq? What would our land, still glorious and free, look like if it were in Iraq's current situation? Our population is not all that much larger than Iraq's. We have 32 million inhabitants or about 28 percent more than Iraq's 25 million. Violence killed 300 Iraqis last week, the equivalent proportionately of 385 Canadians. What if 385 Canadians had died in car bombings, grenade and rocket attacks, machine gun spray, and aerial bombardment in the past seven days? If Canada were Iraq, it would be an ongoing toll, amounting to 20,000 each year.

Compare this to Canada where only 84 people were killed in gang-related homicides all of last year. What if Parliament Hill and the East and West Block were constantly taking mortar fire and 24 Sussex Drive, where the Prime Minister lives, resembled a fortress, surrounded by tanks and barbed wire and concrete barricades? What if almost nobody in the Government Offices at, Rideau Hall, the National Defense Headquarters, dared venture out of their buildings, and considered it dangerous to go over to shop or visit the National Arts Centre? What if all the reporters for all the major television and print media were trapped in the Westin Hotel or the Chateau Laurier in Ottawa or the Royal York in Toronto, unable to move more than a few blocks safely, and dependent on telephone calls to informers to know what was happening in Regina or Halifax?

Wrote Farnaz Fassihi, a Wall Street Journal reporter, in an e-mail: "I am house bound.... I avoid going to people's homes and never walk in the streets. I can't go grocery shopping any more, can't eat in restaurants, can't strike a conversation with strangers, can't look for stories, can't drive in anything but a full armored car, can't go to scenes of breaking news stories, can't be stuck in traffic, can't speak English outside, can't take a road trip, can't say I'm an American, can't linger at checkpoints, can't be curious about what people are saying, doing, feeling....

There has been one too many close calls, including a car bomb so near our house that it blew out all the windows. So now my most pressing concern every day is not to write a kick-ass story but to stay alive and make sure our Iraqi employees stay alive. In Baghdad I am a security personnel first, a reporter second."

No wonder: there are some 25,000 guerrillas in Iraq engaged in concerted acts of violence. What if Canada had private armies operating within its borders totalling 33,000 men, armed with machine guns, assault rifles, rocket-propelled grenades, and mortar launchers, hiding out in dangerous urban areas of cities all over the country? What if they completely controlled Calgary, Kelowna, Thunder Bay, Hamilton, so that local police and the military could not go into those cities? What if, during the past year, the foreign minister (Pierre Pettigrew), the Governor General (Adrienne Clarkson), and the minister of Justice (Irwin Cotler) had all been assassinated?

What if all our cities were wracked by a crime wave, with thousands of murders, kidnappings, burglaries, and carjackings in every major city every year? What if the Air Force daily bombed St. Catharines, Oshawa, Kingston, Edmonton, and other urban areas, attempting to target "safe houses" of "criminal gangs," but inevitably killing a lot of children and little old ladies?

What if there were virtually no commercial air traffic in the country? What if many roads were highly dangerous, especially Ontario's 401, where along that over 800 km stretch, you would risk being carjacked, kidnapped, or having your car sprayed with machine gun fire. What if no one had electricity for much more than ten hours a day, and often less? What if it went off at unpredictable times, causing factories to grind to a halt and electricity to fail in the middle of the winter almost everywhere in Canada?

What if our natural gas and oil pipeline were bombed and disabled at least monthly? What if unemployment hovered around 40 percent? What if?

Roots of terrorism

September 12 was a day where America would have accepted anything from its president. Even a tax increase. Had Washington been wise to the real danger to its and the world's economy, it would have recognized that Osama bin Laden's rise to eminence stemmed from the first Oil War, when American troops were massed on Saudi soil, something this ultra-Orthodox Muslim saw as sacrilegious.

The root of terrorism lies in global, especially American, dependence on Middle East Oil. If Washington had recognized this, and if, then and there, it had started a concerted drive to fuel frugality and energy self-sufficiency, today we would not have $50.00 plus oil nor the Iraqi fiasco. Alas, it is no secret that both President Bush and especially Vice President Dick Cheney have been, and still are, adamantly opposed to reduced energy use and a gasoline tax.

Now the pure profit of the doubling of the price of crude in the last two years goes straight to Saudi Arabia – where it ends up with mullahs who use the money to build schools that preach religious intolerance. What if conservation had been introduced? Then the extra tens of billions of precious dollars now spent on global warming substances would have gone directly to pay down those ever more rapidly escalating currrent account and budget deficits and would have prevented or at least postponed the onset of the most expensive oil ever.

The slogan of the Bush regime should have been: "No more Moolah for the Mullahs." Now pricey oil is a direct gift that keeps on giving terrorism. Before World War II America exported oil. Ever since then – due to rapid expansion – every American president has made US access to Persian Gulf oil a priority – a priority that has put that nation in bed with corrupt, anti-democratic rulers, infuriated rank-and-file Arabs, and entailed military commitments that result in the deaths of thousands.

Phil Verleger, one of the nation's top energy consultants and a longtime advocate of a gas tax, has written: "U.S. energy policy today is in support of terrorism – not the war on terrorism." Now, with demand possibly outstripping supply, the enemies of the West see an opportunity because more than ever the future is all about who has, and who wants, the black gold.

The result has been, as Justin Blum reported in the *Washington Post*: "Terrorists and insurgents are stepping up attacks on oil and gas operations overseas in an effort to disrupt jittery energy markets, destabilize governments and scare off foreign workers, analysts said. The attacks have been most intense in Iraq, but also have occurred in recent months in Indonesia, Pakistan, India, Russia and Nigeria."

Change will come

What if.... Getting out of this oil-dependency trap will require careful resource husbandry, will need enormous investments in renewable opportunities, must entail a from the ground up reworking of land use, zoning and public transportation priorities.

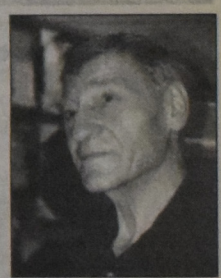
A bit of ethanol in the tank, as Ontario now proposes and what seems to be holy writ in the USA as well, will not cure anything. It only will exacerbate the problem, as corn, its basic ingredient, requires oil to seed, grow, harvest and process it into a 'renewable' fuel. Using more calories than it delivers.

No matter what, one way or another, change is going to come – the only real question is whether political leaders and North American citizens will have the gumption and foresight to get ahead of the problem, or whether the global economic meltdown that will result from worldwide war over energy resources makes our choices for us.

Does that sound too apocalyptic? Too scare-mongering? Too sky-is-falling? So be it. If history teaches us anything, it is that the struggle over resources is one of the most enduringly bloody occupations of humans on this planet. Oil is the most precious such resource today. And so we will continue to bleed.

Frankly I can't see how the world can extricate itself from the Persian Gulf without already having secured some measure of energy independence, whether that be by suddenly becoming a nation of walking, bicycling, air-conditioning-shunning ascetics, with short and lukewarm showers and low thermostat dwellings. Perhaps a miraculous technological breakthrough will happen, leading to new sources of energy production. Perhaps.

Bush missed the chance after 9/11 for conservation and renewable energy. Will Kerry carry it out? Not likely. Still, I can dream. What if ... those $200 (US) billion spent on the Iraq war had been used for light rail and bike paths and encouraging Detroit car manufacturers to upgrade fuel efficiency. Wouldn't we all sleep a little easier?



Bert Hielema lives in Tweed, Ont. His website has been updated, now including all past columns as well as other writings: www.geocities.com/hielemab

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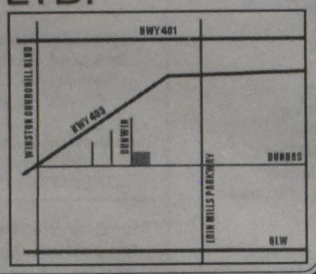

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Peter & Linda **Tensen** joyfully announce the birth of their first grandchild.

Alexandra

was born October 1
to Ben & Trisha (nee Beal).
A niece for Tim and Jonathan.
First great-grandchild for Doris Morrison and tenth for Tine Tensen.

Anniversaries

1964 October 17 2004
St. Thomas, Ontario

"Blessed is he
whose help is the God of Jacob,
whose hope is in the Lord his God."
Psalm 146:5

We give praise and thanks to God for our parents

HEIKO AND HELEN OEGEMA
(nee **Gelok**)

who celebrated their
40th Wedding Anniversary

With all our love,
Mike & Annie Oegema, *St. Thomas*
Cameron, Ian, Derek
Wayne & Jeanna Oegema, *St.Thomas*
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Nov. 2, 1944 Nov. 2, 2004

It is with great praise and thanksgiving to God that the children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren announce the **60th Wedding Anniversary** of:

FRANK AND ANN DYKSTRA (nee **Vis**)

"For the Lord is good and his love
endures forever;
his faithfulness continues
through all generations."
Psalm 100:5

All our love and God's continued blessings for the two of you:
Andy & Wieka Dykstra
Stephanie & Mark Davis
Michael & Angie Dykstra
Vanessa, Casondra
Derrick Dykstra
Tom Dykstra
Clara & Dirk deJong
Ann & Tim Salamon
Emily, Meghan
Christine & Kirk Palmer
Gregory, Lindsey
Ronnie deJong – Nicholas
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Cindy Visser
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"want deze God is onze God, Hij is ons deel, ons zalig lot"

The children of

Reverend **TONY AND** Mrs. **ANN VANDENENDE**

Would like to honor and declare their gratitude for their Mother and Father, Opa and Oma.

We give thanks for their **fifty years** of devotion to each other, to the care and prayers for their children, and to their calling to serve the Church of Jesus

Tony VandenEnde
Cambridge, Ontario

Jack & Cheryl VandenEnde
Sarah, Joel, Josh, and Rachel and little Rebecca
who has gone on ahead of the rest of us.
Cary, North Carolina

Arja & Gerry Pot
Tim & Danielle, Aiden Pot, Christopher, and Nicole
Fredericton, New Brunswick

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Brianna, Justin, and Jonathon
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Wainfleet, Ontario

A service of thanksgiving will take place at Westmount Christian Reformed Church, Strathroy, Ontario November 14 at 10 o'clock.

Blessed are these who hear the Word of God and keep it in their hearts.

"Hoe zal ik U ontvangen?"

will be the theme of the **Heritage Service, December 19,** 2004, 2 p.m. **Zion CRC** Adelaide East and Central Park, **Oshawa.**

Pastor John Veenstra, Mr. Jim Hoogsteen, organist.

Obituaries

Aalborg, Denmark London, Ontario
Nov. 15, 1923 Sept 18, 2004

"Whoever believes in me will live,
even though he dies." John 11:25b

The Lord took to himself on Sept.18, 2004

ETTY VANDER WEL

Dearly beloved wife of
Charles Vander Wel
Dear mother and grandmother of
Chuck & Joanne Vander Wel
Mike, Daryl
Rob & Elizabeth Vander Wel
Christopher

Service of Celebration of Etty's life took place September 22, 2004 at Westmount Christian Reformed Church, Strathroy Ontario

Correspondence: Charles Vander Wel
167 Doon Dr
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"Trust in him at all times; ye people
pour out your heart before him:
God is a refuge for us." Psalm 62:8

January 15, 1911– September 17, 2004
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After a life richly blessed
by our gracious Lord,
he called home at his appointed time
into his eternal glory, his child

HENNY ENNEMA (nee **Hartsema**)

Dearly beloved wife of
Tom Ennema for 67 years.

Lovingly remembered by her children:
Corry & Bill Veenstra, *Brampton ON*
John & Marilyn Ennema, *Brampton ON*
Hemmina (predeceased in 1943)
Kees & Shawnee Ennema, *Brampton ON*
Hank & Mary Ennis, *Strathroy ON*
Loving Oma to 13 grandchildren and great-Oma to 21 great-grandchildren
(of whom 2 are with the Lord)

Memorial Service was led by Rev. P. Van Egmond at Holland Chr. Homes, Brampton on Sept. 20, 2004.

Address: Mr. T. Ennema
Hope Tower #304
7900 McLaughlin Rd S
Brampton ON L6Y 5A7

At home on Saturday, Sept. 25, 2004
The Lord in his grace
took unto himself his child

NELLIE BLOEMBERG
(nee **Van Der Pol**)

In her 89th year
Beloved wife for 60 years of
Harm Bloemberg
Dear Mother of
Anne & Sid VanderHeide, *London*
Ralph & Nancy Bloemberg, *London*
Nela & Mike Couchie, *London*
Corrie Bendall, *London*
Margareth & Roger Baker, *Ailsa Craig*
Dear sister of Miep Kroon-Van Der Pol
Loving Grandmother of
28 grandchildren &
10 great-grandchildren

"For the Lord is good and his love
endures forever,
his faithfulness continues through
all generations." Ps.100:5

Correspondence address:
Mr. Harm Bloemberg
1 Andover Dr #109
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Though outwardly
we are wasting away,
yet inwardly
we are being renewed day by day.
Now we know
that if the earthly tent
we live in is destroyed,
we have a building from God,
an eternal house in heaven,
not built by human hands.

After a lengthy illness the Lord took home on September 30, 2004 our beloved sister-in-law

ANN KLINGENBERG (**Vugteveen**)

She will be sadly missed by
Mans & Roelie Klingenberg, *Woodstock ON*
William & Grace Koopman, *Woodstock ON*
John & Rika Vander Till, *Wyoming ON*
John & Fenny Zwygers, *Waterloo ON*
Jack & Alice Klingenberg, *Thamesford ON*
Gerrit & Trientje Klingenberg, *Harriston ON*
Ali Noordstra, *Bowmanville ON*
Clarence & Jane Damsma, *Kitchener ON*
Harry & Andrea Klingenberg, *Woodstock ON*

The funeral took place on October 4 2004.

Correspondence: M. Klingenberg
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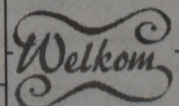
"We hope that you all can come"



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August 2005

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Mathematics
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Music
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To learn more about a position and receive application materials, qualified persons committed to a Reformed, biblical perspective and educational philosophy are encouraged to send a letter of interest and curriculum vita/resume to:

Dr. Rockne McCarthy
Vice President for Academic Affairs
Dordt College, 498 4th Ave. NE
Sioux Center, IA 51250-1697
Facsimile: 712 722-4496
E-mail: vpaa@dordt.edu
Web site: www.dordt.edu/offices/academic_affairs

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CALVIN College

FACULTY OPENINGS

The college is seeking applications for openings beginning September 2005 in the following departments:

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Chemistry	Geology	Philosophy
Communication	Germanic Languages	Political Science
Arts and Sciences	History	Religion
Education (2)	Mathematics	Social Work
Engineering	Music	Spanish
		Statistics

Calvin College seeks faculty members who affirm the Christian faith as expressed by the Reformed creeds and who have academic and personal qualifications for teaching and scholarship. Applications from ethnic minorities are strongly encouraged. Interested persons or persons who wish to make nominations should correspond with the provost's office or the respective department chair. Some positions are pending administrative approval. Further specifics are posted on the college website.

Calvin College
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Email: office@maranathachristian.ca
Web: www.maranathachristian.ca

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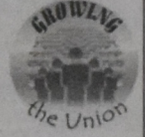
OCTOBER 29 - 30, 2004



The Christian Labour Association of Canada will conduct its biennial Convention, under the theme "Growing the Union" on Friday, October 29 and Saturday, October 30, 2004 at the Four Points Sheraton in London, Ontario.

The Christian community is invited to join us, particularly at the Friday evening banquet session. For tickets please call Susan Salvati at (905) 670-7383 or by e-mailing her at ssalvati@clac.ca.

Tickets are $25 per person, $45 per couple and $15 for students.

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Hamilton – CHAM 7:30 am 820
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CONCERT
Nov. 12, 7:30 p.m. in the **Clinton** CRC .
A program of organ, piano, and vocal music by the *Kruisselbrink Sisters* from Tara, Ontario and the *Men of Note*.
For more information, call **519-482-5372**

Events/Advertising

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Oct 23 Leendert Kooij and the Choir and brass of the Ont. Chr. Music Assembly at St. George's Anglican Ch. Woolwich St. **Guelph**, 7:30 pm. Offering for Partners International. Rev. Brian Lise, Speaker.

Oct 23 Worldwide Christian Schools fundraiser - Concert, **Liberation Choir** 8 pm. at Rehoboth United Reformed Church, 77 Glancaster Rd, **Hamilton**, ON. Please contact WCS to purchase tickets: (905) 387-0235 or canada@wwcs.org

Oct 23 TRINITY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL invites all alumni and supporters to its 40th Anniversary and New Building Dedication. Tours and celebration program, 2170 Itabashi Way, **Burlington**, ON. Ph: 905-634-3052. www.tcsonline.ca See next issue for more info.

Oct 25 **Heritage Day** (formerly Senior's Day) Registration 9:30 am. Program & activities 10 am to 3 pm. at Redeemer University College, **Ancaster**. Call 905-648-2131 ext. 4208 to register. See ad.

Oct 28, 29 **OCSTA** 50th anniversary convention at Redeemer University College, **Ancaster,** and the Hamilton District Christian High School; inspirational address: Dr. Anthony Campolo; educational address: Prof. Hugh Cook. website: www.ocsta.org

Oct 29,30 **CLAC** Biennial Convention "Growing the Union", Four Points Sheraton, **London**, Ont. See ad

Oct 30 **Concert of Sacred Music** by **St. Thomas Crescendo Male Choir** 7:30 p.m. **Wallaceburg** CRC, 150 Bruinsma Ave. **Wallaceburg** (Free will offering) Info: (519) 637-4357

Nov 3 The Bernard Zylstra Lectures at **Redeemer University College, Ancaster,** 11am to 9:15 pm Guest speaker Dr. Theodore Roosevelt Malloch, Ph.D. For more information please contact 905-648-2131 x 4414 or mfaraga@redeemer.on.ca

Nov. 5 **Christian Festival Concert**, Roy Thomson Hall, **Toronto**, 7:30 pm. Order tickets from Ontario Christian Music Assembly, Ph: 416-636-9779 or email: landmkooy@rogers.com

Nov 6 **Concert of Sacred Music** by **St. Thomas Crescendo Male Choir** 7:30 p.m. **Maranatha** CRC, 2811 Highway #2 East **Bowmanville** (Free will offering) Info:(519) 637-4357

Nov. 6,7 **Calvin** CRC, **Dundas**, Ont. will celebrate their **50th year**. Come join our celebration! Festivities are being planned. For info: Fred VanderVelde at 905-336-5619 Fax: 905-336-2376 or Brenda DeGroot at 905-689-6350 or email: p-b.degroot@sympatico.ca

Nov 10 The 2004 Annual **Church & Charity Law Seminar** 8:45 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. at the Young-Nak Korean Presbyterian Church 650 McNicoll Avenue, **Toronto**, ON. *See ad below for more details.*

Nov 12 Concert, **Clinton** CRC 7:30 pm. A program of organ, piano, and vocal music by the Kruisselbrink Sisters from Tara, Ont. and the Men of Note. Info: 519-482-5372

Nov. 13 The Lighthouse Christian Community Centre annual **International Dinner and Silent Auction**. Help celebrate and support this inner-city ministry. New, better banquet facility: Columbus Hall, Lawrence and Dufferin, **Toronto**. Reservations required in advance: Lighthouse 416 535-6262 or email janet@lighthousecentre.ca

Nov 19 **Annual Dutch Christmas Hymn Sing,** 7.30 p.m. at Holland Christian Homes, Heritage Hall, **Brampton**, John Visser, Organist; Lenny Dykstra, song leader; John and Marion Lekx, duet; Johanna Bernard, soloist; Rev. Jacob Kuntz, meditation.

Nov 27 **Concert of Sacred Music** by **St. Thomas Crescendo Male Choir** 7:30 p.m. **Bethel** CRC, 17 Robinson Road, off Hwy. #3 **Dunnville** (Freewill Offering) Info:(905) 387-0235

Nov 28 **Dutch Community Christmas Song Service** at 7:30 p.m. Emmanuel Reformed Church, 170 Clarke St. **Woodstock**. Rev. Roeland Hartmans. Babysitting provided. Refreshments.

Dec 12 **Christmas Concert** by **St. Thomas Crescendo Male Choir** 7:30 p.m. **Knox** Presbyterian Church, 55 Hincks Street, **St. Thomas** (Free will offering) Info: (519) 637-4357

Dec 19 **Christmas Concert** by **St. Thomas Crescendo Male Choir** 7:30 p.m. **Knox** Presbyterian Church, 9 Victoria Street North, **Goderich.** Info: (519) 637-4357

Dec 19 **Heritage Service**, 2 p.m Theme "Hoe zal ik U ontvangen?" at the Zion CRC Adelaide East and Central Park, **Oshawa**. Pastor John Veenstra, Mr. Jim Hoogsteen, organist.

2005

Apr 9 **Concert of Sacred Music** by **St. Thomas Crescendo Male Choir** 7:30 p.m. **Bethel** CRC, 716 Classic Drive, **London** (Free will offering) Info: (519) 637-4357

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CONCERT

Sunday, October 24, 2004 at 7:00 pm
St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church
54 Queen St. N., **Kitchener**, ON

Organist **Jonathan Oldengarm** and the Waterloo Chamber Players join conductor Robert Houghton in a performance of Canadian composer Denis Bédard's Concerto for Organ and Strings. Also featured on the programme is the St. Andrew's Sanctuary Choir, singing a newly commissioned choral work written by Robert Houghton.
A reception will follow the concert.
For more information, call the church office at **519- 578-4430** or visit www.standrewskw.com

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With thankfulness to our Sovereign God,
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LIVING WATER REFORMED CHURCH
(formerly the Independent CRC of Ancaster)

announces the completion of their facility.
We invite friends to our **dedication service** on

November 5, 2004 at 7:30 pm.
in our building located at 1569 Colborne St.,
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CARTER & ASSOCIATES

The 2004 Annual Church & Charity Law Seminar

Wed., November 10/2004
8:45 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
Location: Young-Nak Korean
Presbyterian Church
650 McNicoll Avenue,
Toronto, ON
(Cost: $12)
For information call toll free:
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Fax: 519-942-0300
E-mail:seminars@carters.ca
www.carters.ca

Worldwide Christian Schools – Canada

invites you to attend
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October 23, 2004 – 8:00 pm
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Please contact WCS to purchase tickets:
(905) 387-0235 or canada@wwcs.org

St.Thomas Male Choir "Crescendo"–
Bethel Christian Reformed Church
17 Robinson Rd, off Hwy 3, Dunnville, ON
November 27, 2004 – 7:30PM
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We are also publishing a **history book** and we invite all former members to write a favourite church memory or collection of memories for our **"Members Memories"** section. There is a 300 word limit and all entries are subject to editing. Please send your entries to Melinda Notenbomer :
email:bulletin@nobleford CRC.com; fax: (403)553-2567
or mail: Box 67 Monarch AB T0L 1M0.
For more info on the celebrations please check our website
www.noblefordcrc.com

News

Petra: lost city of stone

Petra treasure house

Phil De Haan

Petra: Lost City of Stone is the most comprehensive exhibition ever presented on the ancient, Middle Eastern city of Petra and its creators – the Nabataeans. And it's coming to Grand Rapids.

The exhibit will be at Calvin College in its Prince Conference Center from April 4 to August 15, 2005.

Petra opened in New York City in October 2003 for a nine-month showing and then traveled to Cincinnati for a September 2004 to January 2005 run. The exhibit is the first major cultural collaboration between Jordan and the United States. It is organized by Cincinnati Art Museum and American Museum of Natural History, New York under the patronage of Her Majesty Queen Rania Al-Abdullah of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. Air transportation has been generously provided by Royal Jordanian.

Calvin President Gaylen Byker, who serves as co-chair for Petra: Lost City of Stone, has been a frequent visitor to the Middle East, including several trips to Petra. So when Calvin had the chance to host the exhibit (becoming one of only five North American venues), he jumped at the offer.

"The Petra exhibit," he says, "is a great fit with Calvin's educational mission and with Calvin's fast-expanding international involvement. The city of Petra is one of the very best archaeological sites in the world for experiencing what life was like in the Middle East at the time of Christ. What's exciting for me is how the exhibit allows people to experience Petra – its history, its art, its architecture, its engineering prowess and its importance in the Middle East, a region of the world that we all need to better understand. For us to have the opportunity to bring this to West Michigan is too good to pass up."

Winged head of Nabataean deity in sandstone

June Hamersma, Director of Calvin's January Series and the other Petra exhibit co-chair, says simply: "The exhibit represents a true gift to this community and a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to experience one of the greatest archaeological complexes in world history."

Hamersma notes too that Petra: Lost City of Stone was almost a decade in the making, having first been conceived in 1994 by the Cincinnati Art Museum, which then joined forces with the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) in New York City in a monumental effort to gather the 200 exceptional objects that comprise the traveling exhibit.

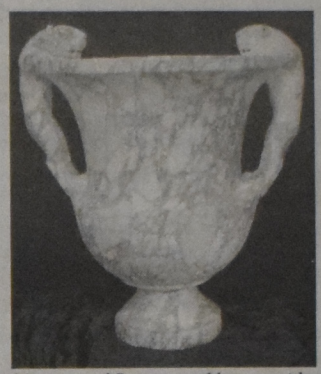
Items on display include stone sculptures and reliefs, ceramics, metalwork, architectural elements, terracotta or ancient water pipes, artworks in various media and other fascinating artifacts. All are on loan from collections in Jordan and throughout Europe and the United States. Many are on display in the United States for the first time.

All told the exhibit will be spread out across 7,000 square feet at Calvin's Prince Conference Center, which will undergo significant modifications to host Petra: Lost City of Stone.

Among the highlights of the exhibition are several pieces recently discovered by archaeologists working in Jordan, as well as a monumental bust of Dushara, on public display outside Jordan for the first time. The bust is almost four feet tall and weighs some 2,100 pounds!

Another highlight at the exhibit was actually unearthed by a graduate of the college: Grand Rapids based archaeologist, teacher and photographer Neal Bierling, who has worked on Petra and helped excavate a marble Byzantine church pulpit that will be on display at Calvin.

Bierling, who originally approached his alma mater about bringing Petra to Calvin, says one of the interesting things about Petra's history is its position as a center for the rise of Christianity.



Monumental Roman marble vase with panther-shaped handles.

"There was an earthquake in Petra in 363 AD," Bierling says, "that many historians say destroyed Petra and its place as a thriving Middle Eastern city. In fact, after the earthquake Petra became a hotbed for the growth of Christianity. Interestingly the Christians in Petra took the pagan temples that had been destroyed and used the materials to build churches and chapels. That's been kind of an untold part of the Petra story."

Calvin plans to tell the entire Petra story through a series of events connected to the exhibit including outreach efforts to local schools and lots of youth programming, a lecture series for adults, a special Calvin history course (open to all), textile displays and more.

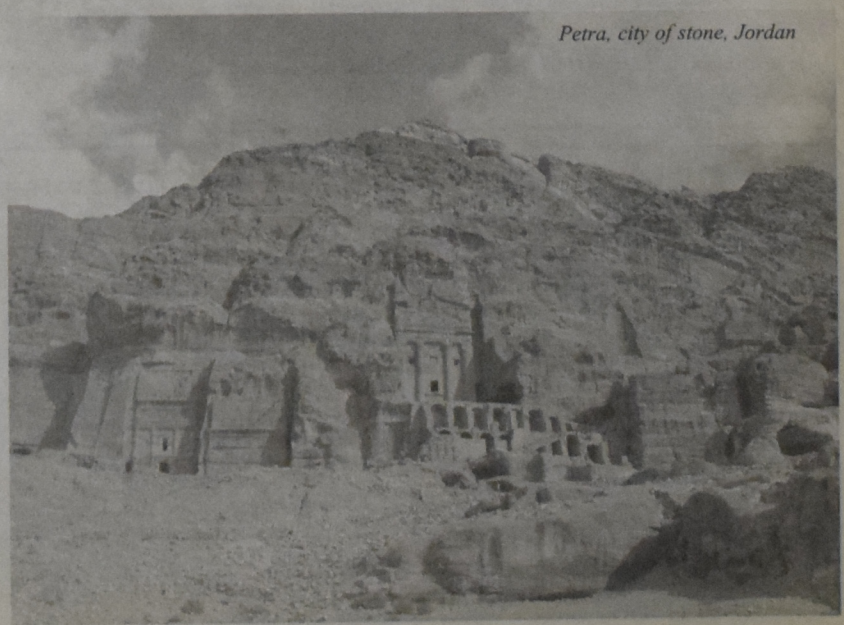
Byker notes that bringing Petra: Lost City of Stone to Calvin's campus will not be a small undertaking for the college. Renovations to the Prince Conference Center (which is just two years old) alone will cost several hundred thousand dollars. Calvin will be building new walls, painting and carpeting, developing and installing temperature and humidity controls, adding lighting and putting in extensive security and alarm systems to protect and enhance the display of the 200 ancient artifacts.

The effort, Byker says, will be worth it.

"This is a world-class exhibit," he says, "and the opportunity to present it to people in Grand Rapids and beyond was one we felt we had to take. It's a singular opportunity for the community."

Relief carving of standing eagle (detail of head)

Tickets for the exhibit go on sale December 1 via the Petra Box Office (526-7800 or 800-PETRA05) and website (www.calvin.edu/petra). Petra: Lost City of Stone will travel to Calgary and Ottawa after Grand Rapids.



Petra, city of stone, Jordan